

San Diego Writes Off G.O.P. Meeting

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SAN DIEGO, May 2 — A battered funeral wreath with a hand-lettered epitaph reading "Rest in Peace—trampled by an elephant" was found one morning outside the San Diego Sports Arena where the Republican National Convention had been scheduled to open Aug. 21.

At the Royal Inn at the Wharf, a 43-foot banner "GOP Convention Headquarters" came down, the police department closed its special riot control training school and a fresh sprouting of bumper stickers proclaimed that "San Diego is unconventional."

The city has written off the 1972 Republican convention, for which it had never shown any enthusiasm, without waiting for the party's National Committee to return its formal verdict.

Mayor Pete Wilson, who in 1962 was advance man for President Nixon's unsuccessful campaign for Governor of California, has called a complete halt to the city's preparations and has set about trying to recover the bulk of an estimated \$220,000 that it has spent thus far.

Party to Act on Claims

He said that the Federal Law Enforcement Assistance Administration of the Justice Department was prepared to indemnify the city for about three-fourths of \$173,000 that had been spent on special police training and equipment.

Richard L. Herman, vice-chairman of convention arrangements for the National Committee, sent word that the national party would act on claims made by the city and

by architects, contractors and others who had been involved in the convention planning.

Businessmen generally subscribe to Mayor Wilson's belief that the city will suffer no real economic loss from the shifting of the convention to Miami Beach, because the convention would have come at the height of San Diego's \$400,000-a-year tourist business. They said that many of the tourists can now be recaptured.

In fact, city officials believe that the loss of the convention may turn out to be a financial bonanza.

The city is negotiating with the Buick Division of General Motors, which canceled its Aug. 16-30 rental of the Miami Beach convention center to make way for the Republicans there. If Buick can be persuaded to shift its dealers' meeting and the unveiling of its 1973 models to San Diego, it is said, the trade-off could be a profitable one for San Diego.

Notices Sent Out

California's Republican national committeeman, Thomas C. Reed of San Rafael, sent letters to the state's 288 Nixon-pledged delegates, alternates "confirm that the convention has been changed to Miami Beach."

He acknowledged later that the "confirm" might have been overly strong, and that the notice was sent on his own initiative without authority from the National Committee.

The Republican National Committee's convention coordinating headquarters on the fifth floor of the Royal Inn has all but gone out of business. Files have been packed for shipment to Florida.

The last hope of California

Republicans to keep the convention here collapsed when President Nixon refused to intercede on behalf of what he once affectionately proclaimed to be "my lucky city."

A flurry of telephone appeals to the White House by Gov. Ronald Reagan, Mayor Wilson, Representative Bob Wilson and Leon Parma of the city's Republican host committee first brought reassurance, then temporizing and finally a response that "the entire matter is in the hands of the National Committee."

The local party leaders had believed that the President, who reportedly was mainly responsible for San Diego's selection as the convention city, would use his influence to keep it here.

Battle Lost

A telephone conversation between Governor Reagan and Mr. Nixon's campaign manager, former Attorney General John W. Mitchell, convinced local party leaders that the battle was lost—at administration levels—several weeks before they became aware of it.

"If they want to go to Miami Beach, let them go; I no longer care," the Mayor said wearily after hurrying to Sacramento, where the Governor told him of his discussion with Mr. Mitchell.

Publicly, the Mayor, Mr. Parma and others involved in the convention planning continue to place almost full blame upon Peter Graham, Canadian millionaire who operates the Sports Arena.

Mr. Graham, in seclusion at his home in Vancouver, refused to discuss allegations that his financial demands had caused the convention pullout.