

## President Appoints MacGregor Congressional Affairs Counsel

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WASHINGTON, Dec. 1—President Nixon moved today to strengthen his uncertain relations with Congress by naming Representative Clark MacGregor as his principal assistant for Congressional affairs.

Technically, the 48-year-old Minnesota Republican will hold the title of Counsel to the President, and will draw a salary of \$42,500, which he now earns as a Congressman.

Mr. MacGregor relinquished seat this year to make an unsuccessful race for the Senate against Hubert H. Humphrey.

Mr. MacGregor will supersede but not replace William Timmons, who has been serving as Mr. Nixon's main lobbyist on Capitol Hill and has managed the half-dozen or so White House staff members who promote the President's legislative initiatives in Congress.

As Mr. MacGregor described it this morning, he will work in "full partnership" with Mr. Timmons, but with the clear understanding that "Clark MacGregor will be the senior partner."

Meanwhile, as speculation continued here about personnel changes in the White House and the executive agencies, it was learned on reliable authority that Raymond K. Price Jr., a Presidential speech writer, will succeed James Keogh as chief of the speech-writing team.

### Price to Succeed Keogh

Mr. Keogh will return to private life next January, at which point Mr. Price, regarded as a moderate on most political issues, will assume supervisory powers over what is expected to be a slightly enlarged speech-writing staff.

At present, the major speech-writing burdens are shared by four men: Mr. Price, William Safire, Patrick J. Buchanan and Lee Huebner.

It was also learned that at staff meeting of the Republican National Committee yesterday, the outgoing committee chairman, Representative Rogers C. B. Morton, told his associates that Mr. Nixon had yet to decide on his successor.

It is the unanimous judgment of the staff, however, that Mr. Nixon's search has narrowed to two men—presidential adviser Bryce Harlow a Presidential adviser, Donald Rumsfeld, a Presidential assistant who also runs the Office of Economic Opportunity.

Committee sources said that the job had been discussed with both men, and that both had expressed some hesitation—Mr. Harlow because he has received competing job offers from private industry, and Mr. Rumsfeld because he has hopes of returning to elective politics.

### Bush a Possibility

Representative George Bush, defeated in a Senate bid in Texas in November, remains an outside possibility, committee sources say.

The appointment of Mr. MacGregor to the White House staff is regarded as a positive move on the President's part by many observers who believe that Mr. Nixon's relations with Congress have never been as cordial or productive as they might be.

Mr. Harlow supervised Congressional relations for the first year of the new Administration, but was elevated to the post of Counselor to the President when Mr. Nixon decided he wanted Mr. Harlow's advice on a broader range of matters.

The task of supervising Congressional relations on a day-to-day basis then fell to Mr. Timmons. He is said to have worked hard and made many friends on Capitol Hill, but officials in and out of the White House have long felt that Mr.

Nixon would be better served by a man of greater public stature and actual Congressional experience.

Mr. MacGregor, who told newsmen that he would not have accepted the President's offer had he not been assured that Mr. Timmons would remain to assist him, is believed to have already made several suggestions to the President about improving Congressional relations.

Mr. Nixon has quarreled publicly with Congress over his Supreme Court appointments. In the recent campaign, he accused the Democratic opposition of thwarting his anticrime proposals and encouraging an atmosphere of "permissiveness."

### Conciliation Approach

Mr. MacGregor is said to believe that an approach that emphasizes conciliation rather than confrontation would yield better legislative results. At his news conference, he said his suggestions to the President must remain "privileged communications," but added:

"I do feel I might be able to be of some assistance in facilitating a more cordial reception for some of the President's initiatives, many of which I think are badly needed."

Mr. MacGregor has served in the House for 10 years. He said that during that time he had always "been close to the President personally, politically and philosophically."

One of the major complaints about Mr. Nixon's handling of Congress has been his apparent reluctance to consult with key Congressman before making major foreign policy decisions. This criticism was voiced last week by Senator George Aiken, Republican of Vermont.

The White House disclosed today that Mr. Nixon had met yesterday with Mr. Aiken and another Republican critic of the Administration's foreign policy, Senator John Sherman Cooper of Kentucky.

The White House press secretary, Ronald L. Ziegler, said that Mr. Nixon conferred with Senator Edward Brooke, Republican of Massachusetts and also a critic of the White House, this afternoon.

It could not be determined whether these sessions had been prompted by Mr. MacGregor, but they represent the kind of two-way communication between the President and Capitol Hill that he is expected to encourage in his new post.