

Ford, Hill Democrats Cooperating

By Jack Anderson and Les Whitten

There has been the usual exchange of political potshots as the conservative Republican in the White House and the liberal Democrats on Capitol Hill draw up the battle lines for 1975.

But behind the scenes, the leaders of both parties are demonstrating an unusual willingness to work together for the good of the country.

President Ford has told subordinates that he is willing to compromise with the new Congress. He has pointed out, as a simple political reality, that the White House has lost power to Congress in the wake of Watergate. He wants his subordinates, therefore, to cooperate with Congress.

In the same spirit, House Speaker Carl Albert has urged Democratic leaders to put the national welfare ahead of their political welfare.

A tacit understanding has been reached that the President won't try to embarrass the Democrats on the spending issue, and the Democrats will work with him to find a formula that will hold down spending yet stimulate the economy.

The hostility of the Nixon era has been replaced by a determination to disagree without rancor and to seek workable solutions.

Footnote: The adviser who always has the last word with

President Ford is his wife, Betty. She read over the final draft of recent TV address, for example, and disapproved of the word "stagflation." It was an "ugly word," she said, which only the economists understood.

The next morning, the President asked his staff to delete all references to "stagflation" from the speech. "Betty didn't like it," he explained.

Influence for Sale—The lessons of Watergate made little impression upon former Rep. Roger Zion (R-Ind.), who wasted no time after his defeat setting up business as a lobbyist.

Before he left office, Zion sent out a solicitation letter on his congressional stationery to prospective clients touting his "20 years in the pharmaceutical industry" and his Capitol Hill connections.

"Since I will continue to be active in the Congressional Prayer Breakfast group, in the House gym, the Members Dining Room and on the House floor," Zion wrote, "I will maintain contact with my good friends who affect legislation."

He promised those who could use a good influence peddler that he "would unravel red tape, open doors, make appointments, work with the Administration or government agencies, influence legislation and assist in any other consulting service required."

Footnote: The former member of Congress is traveling and couldn't be reached for comment. A former aide hung up the phone on us.

Watch on Waste—While most Americans are struggling to make ends meet, the Air Force is pouring \$2.6 million into a project that they have already determined is unnecessary.

Here are the startling details: In 1973, the Air Force was granted the funds to build a new electronics research laboratory in Rome, N.Y. But the Strategic Air Command put a hold on the project. SAC commanders feared it might be too vulnerable to attack from nuclear submarines.

Later, they were persuaded to change their minds and to grant their approval. Construction began last August.

But in November, the Air Force abruptly announced that it was moving its research facilities to Massachusetts and Ohio. This would make the Rome facility surplus.

But it was too late to stop construction. The materials already had been ordered, and the penalty for halting the project would be \$1.8 million. So the workmen are still at it, hammering the facility together, although there is no longer any need for it.

The Air Force maintains that the move will save \$29.8 million over a five-year period. On the contrary, Rep. Don Mitchell (R-

N.Y.), who represents the Rome area, contends the move will cost the taxpayers \$70.2 million over five years.

But one thing seems certain: the Air Force will wind up with a \$2.6 million installation it doesn't want.

Mystery Deed—An intriguing document arrived in our mail a few weeks ago. It was a deed, dated July 30, 1970, showing that James V. House of Summit County, Colo., had sold Richard Nixon of Washington, D.C., a parcel of Colorado property for "valuable considerations."

Had the former President invested in mountain property, which he didn't list in his financial statement? And where did he get the money?

Hours of detective work established that the deed was authentic. The land is a five-acre lot located about 15 miles southeast of Colorado Springs.

We had even more difficulty locating James V. House, but we found him. He had a dispute with the Internal Revenue Service, he told us, and couldn't find anyone to listen to his protest.

So, he deeded his property over to then-President Nixon. "I tried to get his attention every other way," House said, "so I thought this might do it."

It didn't work. The IRS was not impressed, and Nixon turned down the property.