

AGNEW QUILTS VICE PRESIDENCY
AND ADMITS TAX EVASION IN '67;
NIXON CONSULTS ON SUCCESSOR

CONGRESS TO VOTE

Opposition Indicated
if Choice Is Possible
1976 Candidate

By CHRISTOPHER LYDON

Special to The New York Times

WASHINGTON, Oct. 10—President Nixon began his search today for a successor to Vice President Agnew amid indications that he will face stiff resistance from Congress if he chooses anyone who might qualify as a strong Republican candidate in 1976.

The Senate majority leader, Mike Mansfield, Democrat of Montana, said the choice of either John B. Connally, the former Treasury Secretary and Texas Governor, or Governor Ronald Reagan of California—both presumed contenders for the Republican Presidential nomination in 1976—would provoke a fight from Senate Democrats.

Similar warnings had come from Democratic leaders in the House.

Quick Action Indicated

Mr. Nixon's first moves today that he wished to move quickly but with some show of bipartisan consultation.

"President Nixon intends to move expeditiously in selecting a nominee and he trusts the Congress will then act promptly to consider the nomination," Ronald L. Ziegler, the President's Press Secretary, announced shortly after word that the President had accepted Mr. Agnew's resignation spread through the White House.

Mr. Nixon then began meeting with Congressional leaders of both parties and with George Bush, the Republican party chairman, to reach an understanding on the procedures he will follow in selecting a Vice President acceptable to both houses of Congress.

Under the 25th Amendment, ratified in 1967, when there is a vacancy in the office of Vice President the President must appoint a person to fill the

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office, subject to approval by a simple majority of both houses.

Mr. Ziegler said the President would confer over the next few days with a wide range of national leaders, both Democrats and Republicans, to hear their views on who or what kind of person should be named to the second highest office in the nation.

One longtime Nixon counselor who hinted he had talked with the President said that one of Mr. Nixon's first objectives would be to avoid a confrontation with Congress.

Another primary consideration, the President's confidant said, would be choosing a man who shared Mr. Nixon's views on foreign policy.

Accordingly, men such as former Secretary of State William P. Rogers, former Governor William W. Scranton of Pennsylvania and former Senator John Sherman Cooper of Kentucky—all Republicans—figured persistently in the fevered speculation here.

Other Republican names being mentioned in the guessing—much of it uninformed—were those of Senator Barry Goldwater of Arizona; the Treasury Secretary, George P. Shultz; a Presidential counselor, Melvin R. Aird, and Warren F. Burger, Chief Justice of the United States.

Democrat Held Possible Choice

At the same time some observers thought it was not inconceivable that Mr. Nixon would nominate a Democrat.

Mr. Bush, the Republican chairman, said this afternoon that he would "strongly urge" the nomination of a Republican. Mr. Bush dispatched telegrams to more than 150 members of the party's national committee, asking them, he said, "who they think it should be." But Mr. Bush—like other party figures who proposed individual candidates for the job—recognized that the choice at this point was the President's.

Within both parties today there continued to be a sharp crossfire of opinion on the question whether Congress should consider partisanship and the 1976 election in the confirmation process, and whether Mr. Nixon should be prepared to bargain with the Democratic majorities in both House and Senate.

Among the Republicans, for example, Senator Goldwater was reported to have said privately that he and his fellow conservatives would seek to block a nomination of either Mr. Connally, a recent convert to Republicanism; Governor Rockefeller of New York, who lost the Presidential nomination to Mr. Goldwater in 1964; or Senator Charles H. Percy of Illinois, a liberal who is already exploring the possibility of a run for the Presidency in 1976.

Mr. Percy, on the other hand, said today that no conditions should be placed on Mr. Nixon's choice, and that no considerations should be given to "what effect this will have on 1976."

Connally Opposes 'Caretaker'

Mr. Connally, too, has persistently denounced the Democrats' proposal of a "caretaker" Vice President. "The very idea that you'd select a political eunuch," he commented last week. "You select a Vice President on the basis of his capacity to serve if something happened to the president."

Some Democrats, including Senator Edward M. Kennedy of Massachusetts, himself a possible candidate for the Presidency in 1976, have disagreed sharply with the Congressional leadership view that potential Republican candidates be ruled out for Vice President.

Mr. Agnew informed the President last night of his decision to resign and plead no

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contest to a single charge of tax evasion. According to Mr. Ziegler, it was a 40-minute meeting, beginning at 6 P.M., in which the two sat alone before the fireplace in Mr. Nixon's Oval Office.

"The President expressed to the Vice President his sense of deep personal loss and he expressed his appreciation for the Vice President's dedicated service to the nation over the past four and one-half years and his respect for the Vice President's decision to put the national interest above personal considerations in taking this very difficult action," Mr. Ziegler

Nixon Gives No Hint

After the meeting with Mr. Agnew, the president was host as a state dinner last evening for President Felix Houphouët-Boigny of the Ivory Coast, keep-

ing the news secret from most, if not all, of his staff. This morning, shortly before noon, Mr. Nixon still gave no hint of the development as he, in obvious high spirits, presented the National Medal of Science awards in the East-Room before scores of scientists, Cabinet members, reporters and photographers.

It was shortly after 2 P.M., when Mr. Agnew was appearing in court in Baltimore and after he had informed his own staff of the development, that the news swept through the White House. Within a few minutes, Mr. Ziegler appeared in the press room, summarized the developments and released the exchange of letters between Mr. Nixon and Mr. Agnew.

"Your departure from the Administration leaves me with a great sense of personal loss,"

Mr. Nixon said in his letter that began "Dear Ted." "You have been a valued associate throughout these nearly five years that we have served together."

"However," he continued, "I respect your decision, and I also respect the concern for the national interest that led you to conclude that a resolution of the matter in this way, rather than through an extended battle in the courts and the Congress, was advisable in order to prevent a protracted period of national division and uncertainty."

No one in the White House would say that Mr. Nixon welcomed the resignation, but it was obvious that he was relieved of the enormous burden of having to govern for many months or years with his Vice President, the man he had twice

chosen to be his successor in the event of death or disability, under felony charges.

White House Role Pondered

One of the main unanswered questions at the end of this tumultuous day was how much of a role the White House had played in working out the arrangement whereby Mr. Agnew would resign in return for a suspended sentence.

"The President played no direct role in the arrangement that was worked out," Mr. Ziegler said, "or the decision which has been announced today. The President and the White House and the Vice President have made the point that this is a decision which was a personal decision which only the Vice President could make. The President, of course, respected that."

However, White House officials has acknowledged for some time, and again today, that the White House counsel's office has been in on negotiations regarding the Agnew problem "for purposes of communication." Some high Presidential assistants have said privately an Agnew resignation would be welcome.

Thus today's developments were seen as helping the President move farther away from his own problems in Watergate and related matters and restoring his credibility with the country.

Meets G.O.P. Leaders

After the news was announced, President Nixon moved rapidly to choose a successor. First he called Republican leaders from Congress—Hugh Scott of Pennsylvania and Robert P. Griffin of Michigan in the Senate, and Gerald R. Ford of Michigan and Leslie C. Arends of Illinois in the House—who arrived at mid-afternoon in their black limousines and were ushered immediately into the Oval Office.

He telephoned Senator James O. Eastland, the President pro-tem of the Senate, a conservative Democrat and Nixon ally who was on his plantation in Mississippi. And he talked also with Mr. Bush to get his ideas about names and procedures.

Later in the day, Mr. Nixon met with Carl Albert of Oklahoma, and Senator Mansfield.



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