

Giving the Hint to Nixon

Washington

Congressional Republicans across the political spectrum are considering ways to tell President Nixon he should resign after House Republican leader Gerald R. Ford is confirmed as Vice President.

Representative Robert H. Michel (Rep.-Ill.), chairman of the Republican Congressional Campaign Committee, said there's a lot of discussion of resignation in the cloakrooms "but the first order of business is to get Ford confirmed."

Asked about reports of bringing pressure on Mr. Nixon to resign, Representative John H. Rousselot (Rep.-Calif.) said, "discussion on how effective he can be as president is very much evident."

But, he said, "very realistically, resigning is a presidential decision" and "it's hard to bring that kind of pressure."

Methods of how to bring

such pressure are under consideration by members of two Republican house organizations, the conservative-oriented Chowder and Marching Club and the moderate-to-liberal Wednesday Club.

Lawmakers were reluctant to discuss details for attribution, but one member of Chowder and Marching said "proposals have been kicked around" to broach resignation directly with Mr. Nixon at a club meeting.

Another representative said it was thought that such an approach would be effective because Mr. Nixon and Presidential Assistant Melvin R. Laird — both ex-congressmen — are members of the private club. Only a month ago, Mr. Nixon entertained members at the White House.

Wednesday Club members also have discussed calling on Mr. Nixon to resign, a source said.

One member said he "would be inclined to go

along with the idea" of sending a delegation to see Mr. Nixon about "stepping aside."

SHRINK

Republican members of Congress who talked about resignation said this course would be preferable to drawn-out impeachment proceedings which they say would further divide the country and shrink Mr. Nixon's ability to govern even more.

Rousselot said he does not think there are sufficient votes yet to impeach the President, but if there is "one more kind of Cox episode," impeachment could follow.

The President's firing of Special Prosecutor Archibald Cox two weeks ago prompted a deluge of impeachment telegrams and mail into congressional offices.

Rousselot, a conservative from San Marino, said that if the House Judiciary Committee finally does draw up articles of impeachment and

sends them to the House, "then I think the President will resign."

CONCERN

Michel, whose job is to raise funds for Republican House candidates, reflected the concern of members facing reelection a year from now.

He said "People who want to help (the President) don't want to have their own credibility completely destroyed. My gosh, how can we get this point across — that we're all hurting as a result of what's going on."

Symptomatic of the gloomy Republican mood is a comment by Representative Jerry L. Pettis of Loma Linda, Calif.

"I'm bending over backwards for the President so far that I just broke my fifth vertebrae for the President so far that I just broke my fifth vertebrae," he said. "The two lost tapes makes it more and more difficult for the President's friends to see a way out for him as well as for themselves."