

Vice Presidential Papers: Lobbying for

The fact that White House lobbyists, led by Bryce Harlow, swarmed all over the House Ways and Means Committee on July 25, 1969, begging the committee to delay closing a key tax loophole, is now becoming a vital—and dangerous—part of the congressional probe of President Nixon's income tax returns.

The joint congressional Internal Revenue Taxation Committee, headed by Rep. Wilbur Mills of Arkansas, was asked by Mr. Nixon Dec. 8 to inspect his tax returns for the years 1969 through 1972. One key issue is whether he properly took a \$576,000 deduction in those years for donating his vice presidential papers to the government.

Reconstructing events that surrounded the decision by the Ways and Means Committee (also headed by Mills) on July 25, 1969, committee sources say it "has never been under such a siege" as it was from the White House. It was on that day the committee decided to end the private-papers loophole. The White House, desperate to extend the time period for reasons

never fully explained to the committee, pleaded to put the deadline ahead to November.

But the Ways and Means Committee, backed by the House, refused. The White House lobbying campaign then shifted to the Senate Finance Committee, which under the righteous indignation of its senior Republican, former Sen. John Williams of Delaware, set a Jan. 1, 1969, deadline. In conference, however, the House version held and the July 25 deadline was enacted into law.

That sequence of events is now being researched by the joint committee, with strong indications the President in the end will be informed by the committee that the delivery of his papers to the National Archives was not legal and that he owes the tax.

The four Republican members of the 10-man joint committee have agreed that an extensive probe of Mr. Nixon's controversial income tax problems is needed. That will include the tax returns of daughter Tricia, beneficiary

of a \$25,000 trust fund set up by pharmaceutical millionaire Elmer Bobst in 1957.

A footnote: Hard-line Republicans, some inside the White House, are pressing for a Nixon counterattack. They want him to demand that Mills and Senate Watergate inquisitors Sam Ervin of North Carolina and Lowell Weicker of Connecticut also expose their tax returns to public scrutiny.

The seriousness of Gov. George C. Wallace's advance planning for the 1976 presidential campaign is shown in attempts of his agents to recruit a top White House aide of Secretary of State Henry Kissinger for fulltime duty with Wallace.

In contrast to 1972, when Wallace drifted into the presidential contest with neither planning nor organization, his lieutenants are trying to build up a national staff even before his 1974 campaign for another term as governor of Alabama. What's more, he is not

a Deduction

merely seeking political operatives but experts in foreign and military policy, such as the Kissinger aide (who must remain nameless).

A principal recruiter for Wallace is William France, owner of the Daytona Beach, Fla., motor speedway. Since managing Wallace's victory in the 1972 Florida presidential primary, France has entered Wallace's inner circle.

The polished performance of Kenneth Clawson, deputy director of communications for the Nixon administration, in briefing the turbulent White House press corps last Tuesday has led some middle-level presidential aides, to urge his replacement of Ron Ziegler as President Nixon's press secretary.

The daily press briefings, conducted either by Ziegler or Deputy Secretary Gerald Warren, have become ritualistic disasters. Furthermore, there is widespread sentiment inside the White House that the press operation under Ziegler is a shambles. Consequently,

when Mr. Nixon unexpectedly summoned Clawson to the West Wing last Tuesday morning to brief reporters for the first time, some White House aides began pressing for a permanent change.

When the Watergate scandal broke open last spring, Mr. Nixon rebuffed widespread advice (including recommendations from John B. Connally and Melvin R. Laird) that he sack Ziegler. Instead, Ziegler has grown ever closer to the President. But he could still stay in close contact with Mr. Nixon, keeping his post as "assistant to the President," while Clawson takes over the press office.

Clawson is a hard-liner and a devout advocate of the counterattack theory. But many reporters feel that Clawson, a former Washington Post reporter, would respond to their needs better than Ziegler or Warren.