

Presidential Taxes

IT APPEARS FROM A MEMORANDUM written by John D. Ehrlichman which is now circulating around Washington that the White House in 1969 asked the IRS for access to the income tax returns of former Presidents. Presumably the object was to find out how they took their deductions.

The interest of President Nixon in how his taxes were to be treated, in the light of precedent, is perhaps understandable. But the proposal of Ehrlichman as his counsel that White House staff members be given a look at other Presidents' tax returns certainly does not comport with our idea of protecting the confidentiality of the Presidency, of which so much has lately been heard. Income tax files should be confidential as to every taxpayer, not least Presidents.