

A Complaint From the Secret Service

By Vera Glaser

Washington

The chief of the U.S. Secret Service says life would be simpler for him and cheaper for the taxpayers if Congress approved an official residence for the vice president.

Several bills authorizing that are now pending.

H. S. Knight has told a House subcommittee that he needs \$5.6 million more than was budgeted to run the Secret Service this year.

Between October and February alone, \$142,000 was laid out to protect former Vice President Spiro Agnew and almost \$400,000 for protection and structural changes at Vice President Gerald Ford's home.

Should President Nixon be forced out of office, the possibility looms of going through the same costly motions for another vice president.

"I don't think there's a more strong feeling that I have," Knight told the committee, "than that there should be an official residence for the vice president of the United States . . . Our immediate problems about construction money . . . would be dissipated, once we had that."

Referring to Agnew, Knight said, "It is less than appropriate that any vice president should have to live in a hotel. I don't think that befits the office."

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Vice President and Mrs. Ford have lowered the boom on their son John. Switching their earlier "hands-off" policy, they have advised the rugged, 22-year-old University of Utah forestry student to give no interviews.

The lad recently dropped a small bombshell by telling a reporter he's disillusioned with President Nixon, suggesting his father agrees, and saying, "Nixon makes it hard for people who want to believe in him."

The Fords reacted swiftly.

"My first impulse was to send him a telegram read-

ing, 'Speak for yourself, John,' and sign it 'Dad,'" said Betty Ford.

But she figured a personal talk was in order and put through a call to the modest apartment John shares with three others in an old house off campus.

Although he made coast-to-coast headlines, John described his comments to the press as "no big deal."

The published account described John Ford as surprised that anyone would suggest his father coached him on what to say. "My parents trust me and I trust them," he reportedly said.

But that was before things became so sensitive. Ford recently indicated he might be persuaded to take the 1976 nomination, and his wife has said she won't hold him to his promise to retire from politics.

Backing his wife's admonition to their son, the vice president took the phone and tactfully but firmly advised an end to interviews.



H. S. KNIGHT
Vice president's home?