

# Ford Asserts He Will Name A Vice President in 10 Days

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WASHINGTON, Aug. 9 — President Ford told Congressional leaders today that he would nominate his successor in the Vice-Presidency within 10 days.

Awaiting his decision, Republican politicians pictured the Vice-Presidential question as a key to the larger puzzle about the new President's plans and turned it into a lively game of party infighting.

Senator Hugh Scott of Pennsylvania, the Republican leader in the Senate, added his endorsement to others given to Nelson A. Rockefeller, the former Governor of New York. Senator Jesse A. Helms of North Carolina indicated that a score of conservative Republicans in the House and Senate would resist a Rockefeller selection in favor of Senator Barry Goldwater of Arizona.

The American Conservative Union, which has no formal connection with the Republican party, said in a press release, "Mr. Rockefeller would not be acceptable to a majority of conservative Republicans."

## No Suggestions Sought

Mr. Ford's thinking on the matter remained a mystery to some of his closest associates. Melvin R. Laird, a long-time adviser who started the Rockefeller speculation earlier this week, said that he was convinced that the President "hasn't made up his mind."

Several others who have spoken with Mr. Ford in the last 24 hours said that he had not yet begun to ask for suggestions. George Bush, the chairman of the Republican National Committee who has been mentioned as a Vice-Presidential possibility by some former colleagues in the House, met with Mr. Ford yesterday and again briefly today. He said this afternoon:

"There has been no discussion of any kind that would give any indication that [the Vice-Presidency] has been under official consideration."

And thus the guesswork about names gave way today to guesswork about the specifications that Mr. Ford would set for the job and about his broader political plans. But there were few guideposts there; either.

Bryce Harlow, for example, a counselor in the Nixon White House until early this year and a friend of Mr. Ford's for 20 years, said that he had "no idea" whom Mr. Ford might choose or what standards he would apply in choosing.

"Does he want a running mate in 1976 or a fellow who will run for President in 1976?"

Mr. Harlow asked rhetorically, "Or a fellow who can't possibly run again? Does he want an in-house co-worker or a spokesman? Does he want a team player or a guy who's chock-a-block full of ideas?"

None of those questions have been studied yet, Mr. Harlow and others suggested.

## Advice Is Quoted

Mr. Laird's advice, quoted repeatedly this week in favor of a Rockefeller Vice-Presidency and abrupt changes in the Cabinet, became a focus of the Republican discussions today about the directions that President Ford wanted to chart and about whom he was listening to.

Mr. Laird has helped to picture himself as instrumental in Mr. Ford's accession with reports that, as President Nixon's counselor last fall, he talked Mr. Nixon out of his first choice for the vacant Vice-Presidency, John B. Connally of Texas, in favor of Mr. Ford.

Yet other Republican leaders recalled this week that one of the ways that Mr. Laird undermined Mr. Connally was by telling Congressional friends that Mr. Nixon favored him—putting him—putting Mr. Connally in the vulnerable front-runner's position where other opposition could rally against him.

suggested today that Mr. Laird had not helped Mr. Rockefeller's chances by floating his name early and, inadvertently or not, reviving some of the old Republican controversies about the former Governor.

## Lists Are Advanced

Yet few of his old friends professed to understand Mr. Laird's maneuvering. "Mel has a lot of fun with things like this," said a respected Republican power broker. "I don't know what he's been doing."

Meanwhile, Republicans on Capitol Hill continued to advance lists of names for consideration. Senator Scott said, "Governor Rockefeller has been my No. 1 choice for just about everything for a long time. He has grace and strength and tenacity."

However, he added a long list of runners-up, including almost a dozen colleagues in Congress, Gov. William G. Milliken of Michigan and former Gov. Linwood Holton of Virginia.

Senator Mark O. Hatfield of Oregon urged Mr. Ford to consider three Republican colleagues in Congress: Senator Edward W. Brooke of Massachusetts, Senator Charles H. Percy of Illinois and Representative John B. Anderson of Illinois.