

FORD AIDES SILENT ON LINK OF PARDON AND NIXON HEALTH

Hushen Says the President
Is More Concerned About
'Health of the Nation'

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WASHINGTON, Sept. 13—

Presidential spokesmen declined today for the sixth straight day to say specifically how reports of former President Richard M. Nixon's poor health figured in the President's decision to pardon Mr. Nixon only a few days after Mr. Ford had indicated he would await legal process before making a decision.

"The President is of course concerned about the former President's health," said John W. Hushen, the deputy press secretary, in response to questions, "but the health of the nation is more important than the health of one man, and that's his paramount concern."

But most of the questions about the circumstances leading to the pardon, questions that had been asked all week, went unanswered, and White House observers found the lack of answers a sharp contrast to the atmosphere of candor that marked the Ford Administration's first weeks.

'Off the Deep End'

Meanwhile, a member of Congress who visited President Ford this week quoted him as saying he had pardoned the former President because, as the Congressman conveyed his words, Mr. Nixon otherwise "would go off the deep end."

The member of Congress, who asked that his name not be used, said that Mr. Nixon's son-in-law, David Eisenhower, told President Ford last week that he was deeply worried about the former President.

Mr. Ford was convinced by Mr. Eisenhower that "one minute he is in despair and the next in euphoria," the Congressman said, adding that the President told him, "I had to do it."

Met With Candidates

A United Press International report said that the President, at a session with 11 Republican candidates for Governor today, said that he had not yet disclosed all of his reasons for deciding to pardon his predecessor, Gov. Winfield Dunn of Tennessee said after the meeting, according to the report, that Mr. Ford had told the group he "might be able to explain in the not-too-distant future a number of things" about the pardon issue.

There have been a number of reports recently that Mr. Ford had been influenced in his decision to pardon Mr. Nixon by reports of the former President's poor health. In his statement on the pardon Mr. Ford said that the charges hanging over Mr. Nixon's head threatened his health, but his spokesmen have said repeatedly that was based on reports from newspapers and other sources, not from the Nixon family.

However, Mr. Ford apparently made no effort to obtain medical certification of Mr. Nixon's condition and his spokesmen have repeatedly sought to play down the health issue as the compelling reason

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for the pardon.

Mr. Nixon's family, before and after the pardon, have been conducting what seemed to be a public campaign to picture the former President as in poor health. Mr. Eisenhower made a series of television appearances yesterday in which he said that Mr. Nixon's "spirits are not great" and that his leg was swollen from phlebitis.

Mr. Nixon developed phlebitis in early June, just before his trip to the Middle East.

Mr. Hushen indicated that Mr. Ford had not had any reports from any physician who may have seen Mr. Nixon, but he said that he had recently asked the chief White House physician, Rear Adm. William M. Lukash, to keep him informed on any changes in Mr. Nixon's health.

The questioning occurred before Dr. Walter Tkach, Mr. Nixon's physician, confirmed in California today that the former President had developed a new blood clot in his leg.

The former President's health and emotional stability were a subject of controversy even before he left the White House on Aug. 9.

Then, as in the last few weeks, some persons who saw Mr. Nixon reported him to be in excellent spirits, while others reported him to be depressed and preoccupied.