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## Washington

Following pressure from the Nixon White House, the federal government this year traded \$27 million in productive property for a massive, unused building ten miles north of San Clemente so that the former President's records could be stored near his home, The Washington Post has learned.

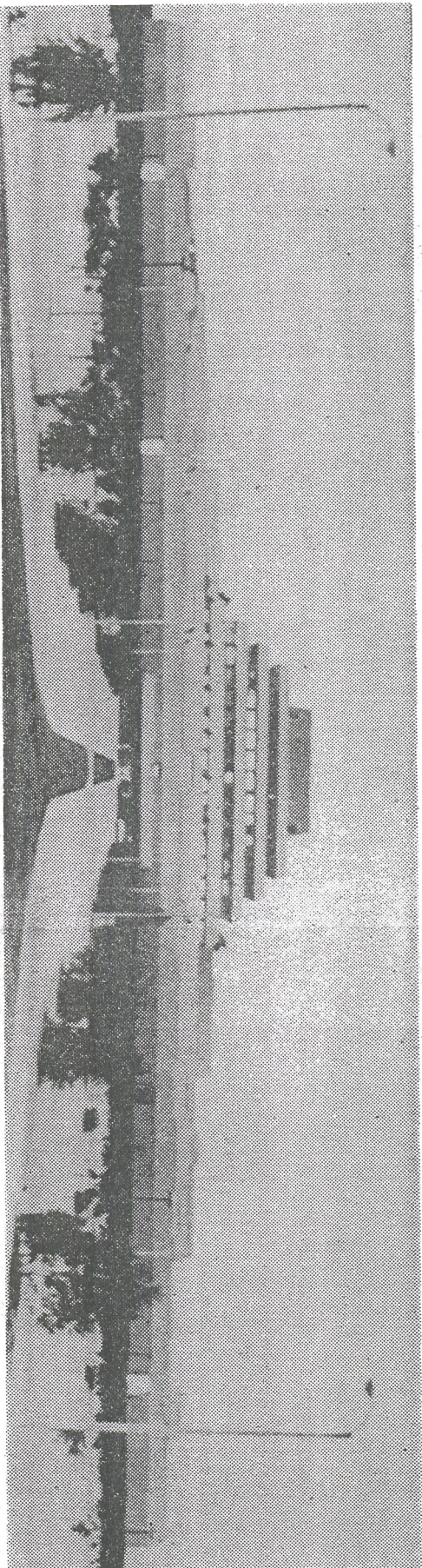
The Federal General Services Administration, which acquired the pyramid-shaped building in the small coastal town of Laguna Niguel, has insisted it was needed to house federal offices in Southern California.

But three years after GSA began seeking tenants for it, the building is still vacant.

GSA acknowledges it now has plans to fill — almost solely with its own records — only a quarter of the one-million-square-foot structure, which was built to be used by 7000 workers.

Because the government still had a need for the prop-

# Nixon 'Pyramid' Deal Reported



AP Wirephoto

**The federal government traded \$27 million in property for this building, ten miles from San Clemente**

erty it gave in exchange for the building in Laguna Niguel, the trade will cost the taxpayers an additional sum that could run as high as \$18 million, government records show.

Although GSA has denied there is any connection between the acquisition of the Laguna Niguel building and Mr. Nixon's records, doc-

uments in GSA's San Francisco regional office show the agency wanted the seven-story building for storage of Mr. Nixon's records and for projected offices for the former Western White House and the 1972 Republican National Convention then planned for San Diego.

The files also show that the exchange initially was

opposed by the Office of Management and Budget, which had to approve it, on the grounds that GSA did not need such a large building in southern California and that the Laguna Niguel building was a "white elephant" none wanted because of its size and distance from major population centers.

The huge building was

built for Rockwell International Corp., formerly North American Rockwell Corp., a major defense and aerospace contractor.

Before it was completed, Rockwell decided it could not use the building after all because its business was declining. After Rockwell found no takers on the private market, the firm suc-

ceeded in convincing GSA to make a decision in 1971 to acquire the building.

GSA files in San Francisco show that when the Office of Management and Budget later expressed opposition to the trade, then White House Counsellor Robert H. Finch intervened with OMB and secured final approval of the transaction.

Rayburn B. Hanzlik, a former White House aide who acknowledges making calls to gain approval of the transaction while he was executive assistant to Finch, said its purpose was to help Mr. Nixon.

Hanzlik added that pressure also came from Rockwell, which wanted other southern California properties it eventually acquired for business activities it already carried out in them under federal contracts. Rockwell employees contributed \$908,000 to Mr. Nixon's 1972 reelection campaign, although a Rockwell official said the money came from individual employees and was not connected with the exchange. Finch acknowledged in an interview that he pushed the idea of acquiring a building near San Clemente to help "support" the Western White House.

Finch said GSA had an obligation to store Mr. Nixon's records near potential sites for his future personal library in California.

*Washington Post*