

SF Chronicle
Ziegler Says

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It's Tough For Nixon

Long Beach

Richard M. Nixon's top press aide said yesterday the extent of the federal aid being received by the former president is exaggerated and said Mr. Nixon doesn't have insurance to pay for his extensive hospitalization.

"All hospital costs will come out of his own pocket," said Ronald Ziegler, who added that the former president has been getting only "limited" federal funds to help him through the transitional period since leaving office.

"Someone neglected to take the insurance out and I think that's the story of a lot of the president's personal finances," Ziegler said in an informal talk with reporters. "You know he was president for 5½ years and I guess people dropped the ball along the way. They sure

did on health insurance."

Ziegler, the former presidential press secretary, described the former Nixon home in San Clemente as more of "a ghost town" than the "plush operation" many have been led to believe.

"It's not a happy place, not a pleasant place," Ziegler said.

Ziegler said reports that from 22 to 64 persons on the federal payroll are working for Mr. Nixon in San Clemente are incorrect.

"There are only about ten people here really and most of those are secretaries, so we're not running a plush operation down there. . . . We do not have 64 people down here serving the president," he said.

He said Congress has yet to appropriate federal funds for the "transition period."



AP Wirephoto

Ronald Ziegler talked with newsmen in Long Beach

He said Mr. Nixon is "getting less than one per cent of what was provided" to previous presidents upon leaving

office. President Ford has requested \$850,000 for transitional expenses, but the

amount has been cut to less than half that in congressional committees. Associated Press