

President Meets Hill Leaders

By Carroll Kilpatrick
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President Nixon said yesterday that a proposed commission on electoral reform should consider the desirability of a single six-year term for the President and four-year terms for members of the House.

Mr. Nixon did not endorse the proposal for a six-year term, but he pointed out that both President Eisenhower and President Johnson supported the idea.

The President met with Democratic and Republican leaders from both houses to discuss the message he will send to Congress today outlining his proposals for a new electoral commission.

It would be charged with recommending new laws and procedures governing campaign financing and practices.

Sens. Mike Mansfield (D-Mont.) and Hugh Scott (R-Pa.) told reporters after the hour-long meeting with the President that he will ask for creation of a bipartisan commission to study a variety of reforms, including campaign financing, the length of presidential campaigns, free radio and television time and the establishment of an elections commission with supervisory and subpoena powers.

In his April 30 address on the Watergate affair, Mr.

Nixon urged that leaders of both parties work toward a new set of rules and standards "to insure that future elections will be as nearly free of . . . abuses as they possibly can be made."

Acting White House counsel Leonard Garment has helped formulate the President's proposals, which are to be sent to Congress at noon today.

Mansfield and Sen. George D. Aiken (R-Vt.) long have urged a constitutional amendment providing for a single presidential term of six years. But the proposal has never received serious support in Congress.

Although Mansfield called

the President's proposal for a study commission "a step in the right direction," Democratic National Chairman Robert S. Strauss said the commission might become "another delaying tactic and whitewash effort."

In a speech at the Capitol Democratic Club, Strauss said he hoped that "without awaiting results of any new, time-consuming studies the Republican administration would join the Democratic leadership in supporting the reforms which have been fully debated in Congress."

Deputy White House press secretary Gerald L. Warren said that the President made no proposals as such

on Electoral Reform Plans

but listed the areas he thought required study.

His list of areas was not all-inclusive, Warren said. The President said he saw the commission completing parts of its study before the Dec. 1 deadline and making interim reports to Congress and the President.

Congress could act on the interim recommendations this year, Warren said the President told the congressional leaders.

In other White House developments, press secretary Ronald L. Ziegler, responding to questions based on rumors in Europe, called reports that the President might resign "absolutely untrue."

Ziegler also said that Mr. Nixon did not know that wiretap records missing from Federal Bureau of Investigation files were in a safe in the office of former presidential aide John D. Ehrlichman.

Acting FBI Director William D. Ruckelshaus announced Monday that he discovered the missing records in Ehrlichman's safe last Saturday.

Elaborating on a comment he made Monday, Ziegler said that Mr. Nixon did ask for an investigation of the Watergate affair last summer, as the President said in his Aug. 29 press conference.

The President "was satis-

fied" with what he was told and made his Aug. 29 statement that no one then on the White House staff had anything to do with Watergate, Ziegler said.

Ziegler would not say which aide the President spoke to about the investigation or how the findings were transmitted to the President.

Over the months that followed, Ziegler was frequently asked whether the report was written or oral. He would never say. Yesterday he said "we never referred to a formal report," which appeared to be his way of acknowledging that it was not written.

The President on Aug. 29

said that John W. Dean III made the investigation, yet Dean said in a Newsweek interview last week he had not been asked to make an investigation.

Ziegler also acknowledged that Dean, Ehrlichman and H.R. (Bob) Haldeman, whose resignations the President accepted April 30, were still on the government payroll because they are involved in "transitional" arrangements. He would not say what these arrangements involved.

He said he understood that the three aides would be off the payroll in "a day or two."