

# Nixon to Lift Order On Farmers' Taxes

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By Alan Emory  
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Vice President Gerald R. Ford, in his first move as head of a new government committee on privacy, has recommended that President Nixon revoke his controversial executive order opening up farmers' individual income tax returns, and the President reportedly has informally agreed.

A new order, drafted by the Office of Management and Budget at Ford's request, has been given to the White House. It specifically scraps the Nixon order, as modified, on farmers' returns and represents a potential major shift in administration policy.

The Vice President won sup-

port last week from Agriculture Secretary Earl L. Butz, although Butz had previously refused to urge Mr. Nixon to withdraw the order.

Still unsettled is a Justice Department opinion that the 1973 order serve as "a prototype" for all other federal agencies. This has spurred legislation tightening the safeguards around tax returns and will be one of the first items to come up before the new Domestic Council Committee on the Right of Privacy headed by Ford.

Ford told Butz that inspection of farmers' tax returns was not worth the threat to privacy for the data that might be obtained and added,

informed sources say, that he thought the order was a bad idea.

The Vice President's recommendation to Mr. Nixon to shelve the order came in a memorandum from the Domestic Council setting out Ford's position and the endorsement from Butz.

Mr. Nixon has provided informal assurances he will sign the revocation.

Ford, who has named Grand Rapids, Mich., attorney Philip W. Buchen executive director of the privacy panel, says he does not intend to allow the group to be used as a "smokescreen" for Watergate. "My own privacy had just been investigated more thoroughly than anybody's since Eve ate the apple," he told the National Governors' Conference here March 6.

He told an interviewer recently, "Having had my privacy invaded by two committees (of Congress) pretty extensively, I think I know a little bit more about how you can react." He specifically cited "laying out your income tax returns . . . putting it all out on the record."

Ford said he could understand people's resentment at seeing something they always considered private made public.

Ford says he wants his committee to "establish common sense safeguards for the fundamental right of privacy."

"What we are going to do as long as I am chairman is to try to put a stop to unwarranted future invasions of individual privacy by the federal government or its agents, period," he said.