

Nixon Stand-Ins

Come and Go

By Sydney Kossen

Political Editor

President Nixon's stand-ins campaigned here today almost on the heels of each other.

Former Treasury Secretary John Connally flew in from Los Angeles as White House Communications Director Herbert G. Klein took off for the Southland.

Connally, former Texas governor, insists that he has no further personal political goals and is here only as head of Democrats for Nixon.

More than 700 attended Connally's \$10-a-plate luncheon rally for Nixon at the Hotel St. Francis.

Local Democrats who shared the head table with Connally included retired shipping executive George Killion, a former Democratic National Committee treasurer; banker Samuel Stewart, hotelman Richard Swig, and transportation consultant Edgar A. Hills, a top man in former Gov. Edmund G. Brown's campaigns.

Crucial Year

Klein, former San Diego newspaper executive, has been with Nixon through at least two decades of state and national campaigns.

"This is the most important year of the century," Klein said, "because on Nov. 7 the voters will make the decision that will determine where the Nation will go."

In his view, the election of Sen. George McGovern would be a "major step backward."

Klein yesterday afternoon addressed the American Bakers Association convention at the Fairmont Hotel and law students at the University of San Francisco.

He conceded in an interview that election results in California are likely to be "closer than in other states" but still part of a "national mandate" for Nixon.

"This is a state where the McGovern people built up a strong organization to get

out the vote in the primary," Klein said.

Defense Cuts

"But McGovern was hurt here by his stand in favor of cuts in defense. His Vietnam speech will hurt him in California."

He called the Democratic presidential nominee's Vietnam peace plan "a move toward surrender."

He declined to get drawn into an exchange on the Watergate caper, except to note that the men caught in the break-in of Democratic National Headquarters are under federal indictment.

'1000 Percent'

And he said Tuesday's detailed Washington Post story of political espionage was "untrue and without basis in fact. There has been the fullest investigation."

Asked whether the Nixon Administration's credibility has been impaired, Klein replied:

"The most unusual thing is what happened to Sen. McGovern's credibility. He started out with an 'Honest George' image. Then he became pragmatic. Now '1000 percent' is a national joke."

To the bakery executives, Klein mentioned the rising price of wheat and alluded to the Administration's decision to sell large shipments of grain to Russia.

"The economy is an issue Sen. McGovern originally hoped was stacked in his favor," Klein said. "The reverse has happened. The economy has turned out to be one of President Nixon's strong suits . . . The economy is strong now and getting stronger."