

Nixon Reported to Prefer Connally in '76

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WASHINGTON, Jan. 30 —

President Nixon told a recent visitor that he thought John B. Connally, his former Treasury Secretary, would make an excellent Republican Presidential candidate in 1976, according to high Republican sources.

In the conversation at the White House, the President was understood to have indicated his preference for Mr. Connally, a nominal Democrat, over Vice President Agnew, a Republican, who has strong support in the right wing of the party.

At the same time, associates of Mr. Agnew say they fear that the Nixon White House

is moving to place Mr. Connally in line for the 1976 Presidential nomination ahead of the Vice President.

According to these sources, the supporters of Mr. Agnew in the Administration believe that Mr. Connally will be brought back into the Nixon Cabinet as Secretary of State. They believe this will take place after the expected resignations, some time in the fu-

ture, of both Secretary of State William P. Rogers and Henry A. Kissinger, the President's chief foreign policy adviser.

This would place Mr. Connally in a strong position to make a bid for the 1976 Republican Presidential nomination. Although the Presidential election is almost four years away, a number of Republican leaders are jockeying for position to succeed Mr. Nixon, who will have served the eight-year constitutional maximum in the White House.

There have been recurrent reports in Washington that Mr. Connally would be brought back into the Nixon Cabinet at some time during the second Nixon term. The White House has neither confirmed nor

after a 15-month term as Secretary of the Treasury. He has since practiced law in Texas, but he has been one of the President's chief out-of-Government advisers. He played a major role in reshuffling the Cabinet and the executive branch to give Mr. Nixon better control of the bureaucracy.

Republican leaders generally believe that Mr. Connally has been an important asset to the Nixon Administration, but there is strong feeling against him as a Republican Presidential contender because of his present standing as a Democrat.

For example, Senator Edward W. Brooke, Republican of Massachusetts, asked today about reports that Mr. Nixon wanted the Texan to be the next President, said: "He is a very able man, and very persuasive. But I doubt that a converted Democrat is going to get the Republican nomination, any more than I thought a converted Republican like Mayor John Lindsay was going to get the Democratic nomination."

Although Mr. Nixon has twice picked Mr. Agnew as his Vice president, there have been recurring complaints from Agnew supporters that members of the Nixon staff have treated the Vice President with contempt.

Conservatives Back Agnew

Now, some of the Agnew people believe that Mr. Agnew's role in the Administration is being downgraded and that an effort is being made at Mr. Agnew's expense to build up Mr. Connally for the Presidential nomination. A number of conservative Republicans are planning to support Mr. Agnew for the Presidency.

On another matter of personalities, Ronald L. Ziegler, White House press secretary, insisted today that there had never been any rift or disagreement between President Nixon and Mr. Kissinger on Vietnam policy.

NEWS INDEX

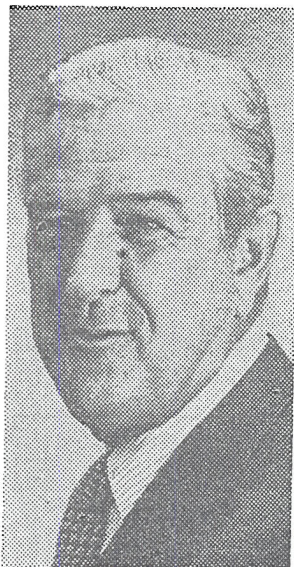
	Page		Page
Art	26	Movies	24-29
Books	43	Music	24-29
Bridge	42	Obituaries	38
Business	49-64	Cp-Ed	37
Crossword	43	Sports	31-33, 39, 44
Editorials	36	Theaters	24-29
Family/Style	46	Transportation	66
Financial	49-64	TV and Radio	66-67
Going Out Guide	26	U. N. Proceedings	2
Man in the News	3	Weather	66

Continued From Page 1, Col. 8

denied these reports while associates of Mr. Connally have encouraged them.

On a number of occasions Mr. Nixon has expressed his high admiration for the former Texas Governor, who headed Democrats for Nixon in the 1972 Presidential race. He supported state and local Democratic candidates in Texas.

Mr. Connally resigned from the Nixon Cabinet last May 16



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John B. Connally