Nixonto 1976 Candidates: Don't Be Eager Too Soon

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By CLIFTON DANIEL FEB 1 1973

running for office for 26 years world. with — as he said — "mixed But Mr. Nixon added that he, results," offered some advice in turn, would be out of his today to candidates for the mind if he were to endorse any-Presidency in 1976: Don't be body at this time when

out of his mind," President dency. Including in that number Nixon said, if he starts "run-ning for the nomination before "several Governors," Mr. Nixon

Mr. Nixon was responding to been trrough a few primaries.' a question, at his first news The commentary on Presiconference in 112 days, about dential candidates four years reports that he had said John hence served as a brief intermake an excellent Republican campaign just ended. The capi-

belief that Mr. Connally, a

WASHINGTON, Jan. 31 — of Texas, "could handle any Richard Nixon, who has been job" in the country or the

number of people" have indi-A Presidential candidate "is cated an interest in the Presithe elections of 1974 are consaid he would not make his cluded." [Question 7, Page 20.] choice "until after they have

B. Connally, his former Secre-lude in the increasingly raucous tary of the Treasury, would debate over the fruits of the Presidential candidate in 1976. tal is preoccupied with a seem-The President reiterated his ingly clash between the White

Democrat and former Governor Continued on Page 20, Column 1

House and the Congress.

Mr. Nixon spoke to that issue, too, declaring with surprising eequanimity an unassailable right to refuse to spend money as Congress directed him him to— at the same time that members of Congress were deliberating about means to spell out their belief that he close to the Vice President Agnew profess to believe that Mr. Connally cannot make it — at least on the Republican ticket.

Victor Gold, who has just given up his job as press secretary to Mr. Agnew, but remains close to the Vice President, said had no such right. [Details, Page 18.] But the Democrats who control the Congress were likely to be interested in the discussion, however premature, abuot the prospects of a nominal Democrat winding up on the Republican ticket in 1976.

Whether or not Mr. Connally must grow among blacks and

Continued From Page 1, Col. 3 is a candidate and whether or

young voters. "But is John ing from the Bible: 'A setting

asked.

Alluding to a report from the Agnew camp that the Nixon Administration would try to build up Mr. Connally by making him Secretary of State, Mr. Gold said that, if sindeed that did happen, Mr. Connally would "be the first guy who dug himself out of the swamplands of Foggy Bottom to win the Presidential nomination of the other party." Foggy Bottom is the site of the State Department.

Mr. Gold also quoted what the Mr. Nixon has entered his second term as President and is ineligible to seek re-election. Today at the White House, the "setting sun" seemed very benign. A smile lurked around Mr. Nixon's lips and eyes as indeed that did happen, Mr. Nixon's lips and eyes as he dispensed political advice to potential successors and scored points against the adversary he never forgets—the news media.

Declaring that "we have finally achieved a peace with honor," the President told the newsmen clustered around him he called on "old Southern say-in the small, hot White House

Connally going to attract them sun giveth little strength'"—with his \$250 suits?" Mr. Gold a presumed allusion to the fact that Mr. Nixon has entered his

briefing room, "I know it gags pay their price," the President some of you to write that said, "and the price is not a phrase, but it is true, and most junket in the Peace Corps.' Americans realize it is true. . ."

Americans realize it is true. . . ."
[Question 3, Page 20.]

Later, Mr. Nixon remarked that two and a half million Americans had given two or three years of their lives to serving in a war that "had yery little support among the media and the intellectual circles and the rest."

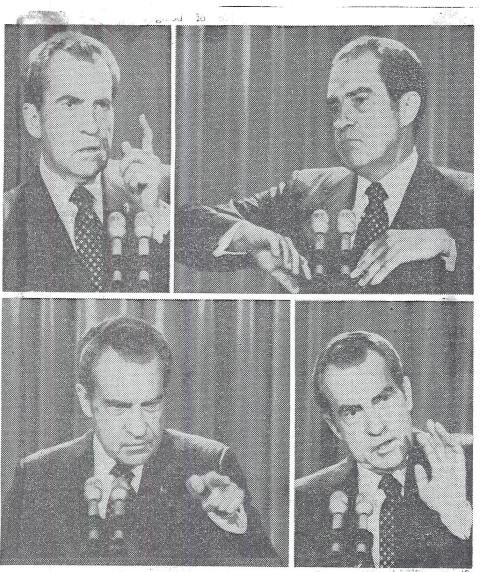
He was talking then about an amnesty for draft evaders and deserters. The lurking smile had disappeared. His jaw had hardened.

"Those who deserted must The respectful questions and the assertive replies led some to wonder why the President has a reputation for avoiding news conferences—why he had not held one since Oct. 5, 1972, before his re-election. It seemed that he had taken strength from the election returns, one of the greatest political victories in American history.

From a distance of 15 feet, Mr. Nixon showed no signs of nervousness. He did not hesitate. He was not tongue-tied. Indeed, he was so voluble that his replies seemed longer than The respectful questions and

his replies seemed longer than beföre. He answered 15 questions in 36 minutes, as against .17 questions in 38 minutes at the Oct. 5 session.

The information bank in his head was full of details. Not only did he remember the last name of one of five American prisoners held in China - John T. Downey — but he was also able to recall the length of his sentence — 30 years, commuted to five. He also knew, and said for the first time, that Mf. Downey was an agent of the Central Intelligence Agency. (Question 15, Page 20.)



President Nixon gesturing during his news conference yesterday in Washington