

Nixon Urged To Face Press

The chairman of the Republican Governors Association suggested here yesterday that President Nixon be "cross-examined" by the press at a series of news conferences to "clarify the ambiguities" about the Watergate affair.

The proposal was immediately endorsed by Democratic leaders at Lake Tahoe, where the National Governors Conference opens today.

Governor Linwood Holton of Virginia, a strong supporter of the President, called for a series of presidential press conferences during a television appearance on NBC's "Meet the Press," which originated in San Francisco.

He said that was the only way Mr. Nixon could "regain complete confidence (of) the American people."

"My suggestion is that he's going to have to come several times (to press conferences) and be cross-examined," Holton said, "because in a thing as complicated as Watergate, (the news media) and the public are going to have ambiguities that will need to be clarified.

"And the President's going to have to be cross-examined several times, over a period of weeks and even months."

CONFIDENT

Holton said he hadn't "the slightest doubt" the President could satisfactorily clear up questions about his relationship to Watergate and regain public confidence if he would submit to in-depth questioning by the press.

At Stateline, Nev., where the governors will meet to-

day, Holton's proposal was greeted enthusiastically by Robert Strauss, chairman of the Democratic party.

"Nothing would serve this nation better than an immediate, full-scale, open, long-lasting press conference on the part of the President," Strauss said.

He said "the public wants to believe" in the President, but "the only way he's going to do it is to go to them."

AGREE

"I'm wholeheartedly in accord," said Maryland's Governor Marvin Mandel, a Democrat and chairman of the governors' conference. He said a series of presidential press conferences "would remove a lot of doubt that exists today."

Another Republican governor, Daniel Evans of Washington, also agreed that "something like that would go a long way to restoring public confidence and belief in the President.

"This, of course, presumes he will say forcefully what is being said for him through White House releases — that he had nothing to do with Watergate nor the subsequent coverup, Evans said.

BURGLARY

In another development at Stateline, Democratic chairman Strauss announced the FBI is investigating a burglary at his Dallas home last July, 2½ weeks after the Watergate break-in in Washington.

Strauss said his home was ransacked but nothing was taken so it didn't occur to him until recently that there might be some connection with Watergate.

"It was no big deal," he said.