

Talk of Rockefeller As Vice President

Washington

The same Republican forces that persuaded President Nixon to choose Gerald Ford as the replacement for Spiro Agnew predicted yesterday that Nelson Rockefeller would become Ford's vice president.

Melvin R. Laird, the longtime GOP congressman who was Mr. Nixon's former defense secretary and counselor, said that he favored Rockefeller for the nomination.

"Ford and Rockefeller will form a winning combination for the Republican Party," Laird said.

Laird has been credited with convincing Mr. Nixon to submit Ford's name to

the Congress as vice president at a time the President favored John Connally—who since has been indicted for allegedly obstructing justice, committing perjury and receiving illegal payments.

But it is not Laird alone who is pushing for a Rockefeller nomination.

A source close to a leading midwestern Republican senator said that "Rockefeller fits the needs perfectly."

He said it is important to Republicans in Congress and elsewhere that Ford's choice not be someone who would be likely to be a candidate in 1980. Rockefeller would be 72 that year.

Two Rockefeller associates said there is little

doubt that the former New York governor would accept the vice presidency if Ford selected him.

Others who have been mentioned as vice presidential possibilities for Ford include Elliot Richardson, Governor Ronald Reagan of California and Laird himself.

Reagan is not believed to have any expectation of the nomination. Laird said he does not want to be vice president. And Richardson, who resigned from the Nixon administration rather than fire Watergate special prosecutor Archibald Cox, is considered to have political liabilities among Republican loyalists.

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