

NIXON ADDRESSES TEAMSTER BOARD

Tells Union Leaders, After
Hoffa Resigns, That His
'Door Is Always Open'

JUN 22 1971

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Special to The New York Times

KEY BISCAYNE, Fla., June 21 — President Nixon moved quickly today to bolster his relationship with the new leadership of the International Brotherhood of Teamsters following James R. Hoffa's formal resignation as president of the union.

Hoffa, who is serving a prison sentence in Lewisburg, Pa., for jury tampering, notified the union's executive board by telegram last evening of his resignation.

This morning, the union's executive committee swore in Frank Fitzsimmons as his successor, and by noon Mr. Nixon had driven from his Key Biscayne Villa to the Playboy Plaza Hotel in Miami Beach, where he addressed the board in private session for about 20 minutes.

According to Ronald L. Ziegler, the White House press secretary, Mr. Nixon told the gathering, which also included members of the union's constitution committee, that he looked forward to an open

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Nixon, in Talking to Teamsters, Says His 'Door Is Always Open'

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dialogue between the White House and all unions, including those who oppose the Republican party politically.

Of the teamsters in particular, he said: "My door is always open to President Fitzsimmons and that is the way it should be."

Convention Next Month

Mr. Fitzsimmons, a Hoffa lieutenant who has been serving as general vice president, will serve as president until the teamsters' convention in Miami Beach next month. There he is expected to win re-election despite a challenge to his candidacy announced this morning in Washington by Don Vestal, head of Nashville Teamsters Local 327.

Hoffa's resignation, though not unexpected in view of his announcement from prison on June 3 that he would not seek re-election, will undoubtedly make it easier for Mr. Nixon to cultivate openly political support among the wealthy, two-million member union.

The union, whose pension fund totals roughly \$1-billion in assets, is thought to be largely Democratic among its rank-and-file membership but has been generous to Republican candidacies on the state and local level.

The White House emphasized that Mr. Nixon was not, by his presence at the Playboy Plaza today, conferring a special favor on the teamsters. Mr. Ziegler said that the union leaders had invited the President to address them two days ago, before Hoffa's formal resignation became known, and that the President had met with other labor and business groups as well.

Discussions Invited

In his summary of the President's remarks, Mr. Ziegler said that Mr. Nixon had invited the teamster leaders to discuss legislative matters with the White House whenever they felt it necessary to do so. He praised the union for what he

described as its consistent support of the White House on national security issues.

His general theme, Mr. Ziegler reported, was "what's right about America" — a listing of the country's material and spiritual achievements that, in Mr. Nixon's view, are too often overlooked in the present-day debates over racial, generational and foreign policy issues.

Dissident Files Suit

WASHINGTON, June 21 (AP) — Mr. Vestal, the Local teamsters leader from Tennessee said today that he would run for national president of the union against Mr. Fitzsimmons. He also filed suit in United States District Court seeking to block the teamsters' scheduled convention July 5 on the ground that it had been illegally scheduled.

Mr. Vestal, whose Nashville local has been in a continuing battle with national teamsters leaders, contended that Mr. Fitzsimmons had been illegally acting as union president since Hoffa went to prison four years ago.

He cited a United States District Court ruling in Nashville dissolving a trusteeship over his local as the ground for his contention. The Federal judge in Nashville, L. Clure Morton, ruled that Mr. Fitzsimmons had improperly imposed the trusteeship.

District Court Judge June Green set June 28 for a hearing on Mr. Vestal's request to delay the July 5 convention and impose either a receiver to run the union or a three-member panel of trustees composed of himself, Mr. Fitzsimmons and a neutral party.

Mr. Vestal said that he was also asking that Teamsters International officials be elected by a referendum vote among all members rather than by the present system of election by convention delegates.

"Under the setup now, there is no way any rank-and-file member has anything to say about their international officers," he said.