

San Diegans Expressing Some Misgivings

By EVERETT R. HOLLES
Special to The New York Times

SAN DIEGO, July 22—The Republican party's decision to hold its 1972 convention in San Diego was greeted today with a few cheers and considerable misgiving by the city's 700,000 citizens, most of whom have Republican loyalties.

Local party officials, the Chamber of Commerce and the Convention and Visitors Bureau talked excitedly about "putting San Diego on the map," but the reaction of others ranged from restrained enthusiasm to indifference, apprehension and anger.

Even among the Republican faithful, there were many who feared what the convention might do to the city's image of order and tranquility.

Many San Diegans appeared to regard the convention as a "command performance" in which they have become involved at the bidding of President Nixon, who six weeks ago let it be known that he would like to have the convention—and presumably his renomination for a second term as President—take place here in what he once described as "my lucky city."

'Education Effort' Ahead

"This is tremendous news and I am sure we will give them one of the greatest conventions ever held," said Mayor Frank Curran, a Democrat who a month ago was critical of the whole idea. "For San Diego it will be a prestigious event, opening the door to other large conventions. And it won't cost our property owners a penny."

Members of a new civic committee for convention planning, acknowledging that public support has been less than wholehearted, said "an educational effort is now ahead of us" to interest the average citizen in supporting the convention. The committee was confident that, with the decision now sealed, the doubts would give way to enthusiasm "as a matter of civic pride."

Four of 15 announced candidates for Mayor have proclaimed their opposition to the convention. One of them, Mrs. Virginia Taylor, who is a member of the County Republican Central Committee, announced today that she intended to seek a court injunction to block the city's plans to use hotel room tax revenues for the Republican gathering.

"Everybody seems to be ex-

cited about it except the people," said County Supervisor Jack Walsh, a candidate for mayor who tried to block San Diego's \$1.5-million convention bid.

A resident of Misson Bay, just north of the 15,000-seat International Sports Arena where the convention will meet, was more blunt.

"Why should we be putting up all this money to have our town turned upside down, perhaps even torn apart by radical demonstrators?" asked Herbert Coulton, a retired druggist from Terre Haute. "Before we're through with this thing, San Diego's motto of 'City in Motion' may have placed upon municipal serv-shambles."

A sizable segment of the citizenry, to judge from protests before the City Council and letters to the newspapers, reels that the city yielded to the White House without giving enough consideration to the cost and confusion involved in playing host to the 2,680 Republican delegates and alternates and 25,000 to 30,000 convention followers.

The largest convention ever held in San Diego was that of the California American Legion in 1967, which packed the city with 18,000 persons.

Before Mr. Nixon's intervention, San Diego had formally decided that it had no interest in either the Republican or Democratic convention because of the cost and the strain that would be placed upon municipal services. Furthermore, either convention would compel the city to cancel the most lucrative month of its summer tourist season.

Officials Reverse Themselves

However, after White House representatives brought word that the President was prepared to use his influence to swing the choice to San Diego, city and county officials did an about-face and hurriedly put together the \$1.5-million bid.

Convention Bureau and Chamber of Commerce officials told the council that the event would establish the city as a front-rank convention center and help to attract new business to take up the slack of severe cutbacks in the aerospace industry and impending reductions in military spending here. Aerospace and the military are San Diego's biggest revenue

producers, followed by tourism.

Members of the Republican National Committee's site selection delegation, who returned here for a second visit last week, were troubled by the extent of the public's criticism.

A San Diego lawyer, Gordon Luce, who is vice chairman of the Republican State Central Committee, acknowledged that he, too, had been concerned about the public's reaction but assured the national party officials that, once committed, San Diegans could be counted on for a wholehearted effort in making the convention a success.

Word of the misgivings among San Diegans also reached the White House, particularly after Mayor Frank Curran, a Democrat, scoffed at convention delegates as "a bunch of brown baggers" who leave very little money behind. He also warned that the city might find itself liable for costs far exceeding its pledge to the party. The Mayor later underwent a change of heart, however, and voted for the guarantee to the Republicans.

Representative Bob Wilson of San Diego, a Republican who raised \$400,000 of the \$1.5-million offer, hurried to the White House with assurances that San Diego really wanted the convention.

Costs Are Cited

Much of the opposition to entertaining the Republicans centers on the cost of the convention and its possible effect on the \$400-million-a-year tourist business.

Convention Bureau officials have talked of \$6-million or \$7-million in gross revenues from the convention, but this estimate has been challenged by others who contend that the city stands to lose \$25-million or \$30-million in regular tourist income.

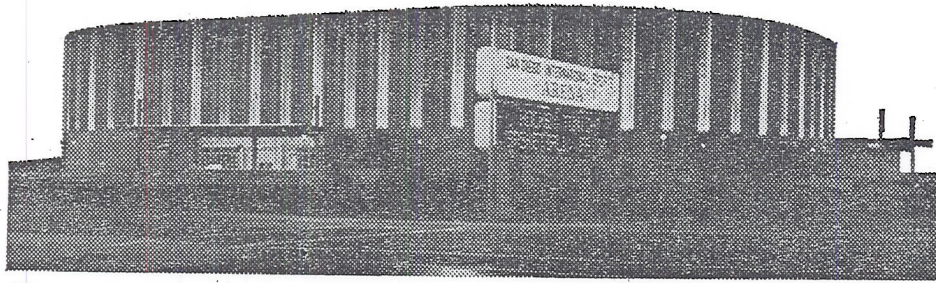
Of deeper concern, however, is the possibility of demonstrations and disorders that might not only be costly and destructive but also highly damaging to the city's reputation as a peaceful city that has been free of major outbreaks of violence.

Chief of Police Ray Hoobler said that although he hoped for a peaceful convention, he was "planning for trouble" and that the city's 1,300 policemen would be augmented by at least 500 men from the county

sheriff's force, California Highway Patrol and nearby cities.

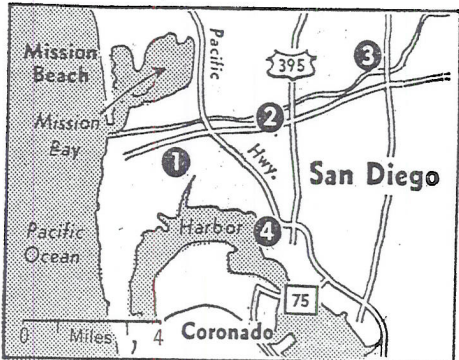
Mr. Luce, in an interview, conceded the risk of demonstrations "that could ruin the city's whole image" but said that he was hopeful the convention could put aside controversy and become "a national patriotic event in this ideal setting."

He suggested that if disorders occurred, Mr. Nixon "would have the advantage of being able to call upon the military people of the community," meaning the large Navy and Marine Corps establishments in and around San Diego.

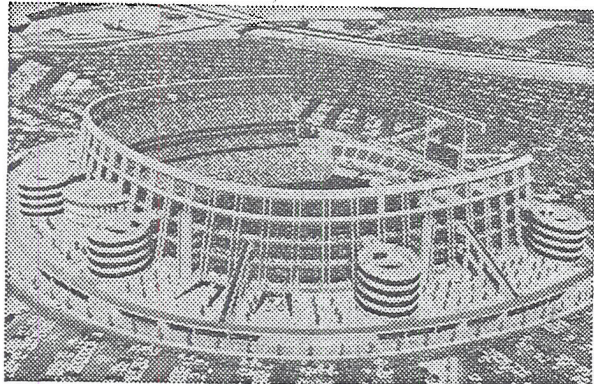


Site of 1972 Republican National Convention

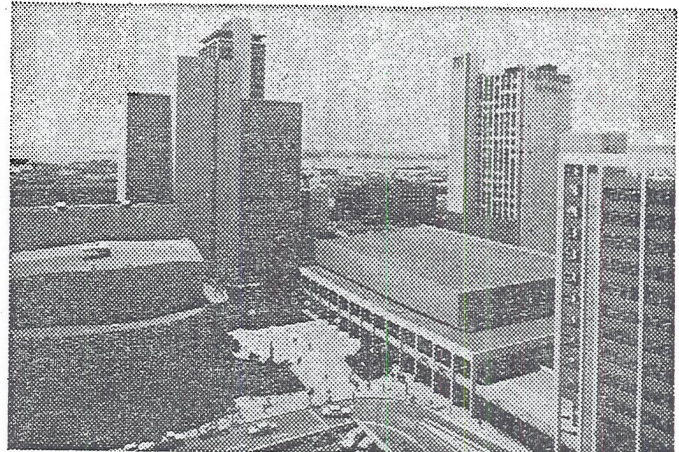
① INTERNATIONAL SPORTS ARENA



② TOWN AND COUNTRY HOTEL



③ SAN DIEGO STADIUM



CIVIC CENTER ④

The New York Times July 24, 1971
Republicans plan to convene in the International Sports Arena, set up headquarters in the Town and Country Hotel, hear party nominee's acceptance speech at the San Diego Stadium and make Civic Center a Presidential enclave.