

DEC 17 1971

SEWILLAN

ASHBROOK PLANS PRIMARY DECISION

Potential Nixon Challenger
to Go to New Hampshire

By **ROBERT B. SEMPLE JR.**
Special to The New York Times

WASHINGTON, Dec. 16 — Representative John M. Ashbrook, a conservative Ohio Republican, will travel to New Hampshire next week to confer with supporters there and decide whether to oppose President Nixon in the state's March 7 Presidential primary.

Sources close to Mr. Ashbrook said he would reveal his decision Dec. 28 or 29, and there was considerable speculation here that he had already decided to make the effort.

The Washington Star reported in its afternoon editions that Mr. Ashbrook—who said only a week ago that he was "leaning



Associated Press

Representative John M. Ashbrook, Republican of Ohio, is expected to announce Presidential bid.

a little more against it than for it"—had made up his mind to mount a conservative challenge to Mr. Nixon after a talk with William F. Buckley Jr., the columnist and editor.

According to this account, Mr. Buckley assured Mr. Ashbrook that he would support him in the primary campaign and would write an editorial to that effect in the National Review, the magazine Mr. Buckley publishes. Mr. Ashbrook's office would not comment on the report, and Mr. Buckley could not be reached at his Manhattan offices.

However, an aide to Senator James L. Buckley, Conservative-Republican of New York, said it was his clear understanding that the conversation had taken place and that the editorial board of National Review had now decided to support an Ashbrook candidacy to which William Buckley, the Senator's brother, would lend his editorial efforts.

Senator Buckley himself has said he will not break with the President. He opposes a conservative insurgency.

The aide said he did not think that the National Review board or the Senator's brother intended to support Mr. Ashbrook "over the long haul." Instead, he suggested, the editor viewed the Ashbrook candidacy as a tactical device to put pressure on the President and remind him of the needs and complaints of his conservative constituency.

Complaints Stated

Some of these complaints were listed in a statement inserted by Mr. Ashbrook in this morning's Congressional Record. Mr. Ashbrook accused the President of turning his back on his own 1968 campaign statements and the country's conservatives voters in both domestic and foreign policy.

On the domestic side, he cited Mr. Nixon's welfare reform program, his budget deficits, and what Mr. Ashbrook depicted as his refusal to jettison "New Frontier—Great Society programs." In foreign policy, Mr. Ashbrook questioned Mr. Nixon's "apparent belief that he can cut a deal with the rival Communist powers," and he described the Administration's China policy as a "disaster area."

Publication of Mr. Ashbrook's statement followed announcements in Maryland and Oregon of the formation of citizen committees aimed at helping Mr. Nixon achieve re-election. The announcements were accompanied by statements from leading Republicans praising the President for precisely those domestic and foreign policy initiatives that Mr. Ashbrook attacked.