

Nixon Bid to Sinatra

Washington

Frank Sinatra, entertainer, friend of Vice President Spiro Agnew and contributor to Republican

campaigns, has been invited to an evening in his honor at the White House.

According to Sinatra's publicist, Jim Mahoney, and the White House aide who issued the invitation, the affair is to be a reception at which Sinatra will be the guest of honor.

The White House press office reported that the singer had been asked to perform at an "Evening in the White House."

The matter was of interest

in the capital because of persistent rumors that President Nixon was perturbed about Agnew's friendship with Sinatra.

Peter J. Malatesta, a nephew of Bob Hope and an assistant to Agnew, said he had invited Sinatra to the White House on behalf of H. R. Haldeman, a top aide to Mr. Nixon. Malatesta said that the invitation was made on January 15 or 16, before Sinatra was involved in an incident that reportedly embarrassed Mr. Nixon.

Friday night, Gerald W. Warren, deputy White House press secretary, said that "early in January the Presi-

dent had expressed an interest in having Mr. Sinatra perform in the White House this year." This was transmitted to Sinatra and he accepted.

Asked if the affair was a reception for Sinatra, Warren replied that it could not be called that but it would be an "Evening in the White House" similar to others held by President and Mrs. Nixon at which other figures from the entertainment world had appeared.

Mahoney, the publicist, said that Sinatra was "delighted, flattered and highly honored" by the invitation and that the incident, in

which he cursed a newspaper columnist, had not affected the offer to come to the White House.

Mahoney said that Sinatra was checking his schedule so that he could supply the White House with dates on which the reception could be held.

Sinatra was a major contributor to the Nixon-Agnew campaign, having given in the neighborhood of \$50,000, according to preliminary reports.

The singer has had a growing friendship with Agnew over the last two years, and the vice president has been a frequent guest at Si-

natra's estate in Palm Springs, Calif.

According to some reports, the Agnew-Sinatra friendship has been a factor leading to a cool relationship between the President and vice president.

Mr. Nixon told a recent visitor to the White House that he preferred John B. Connally, his former Treasury secretary, to Agnew as the Republican presidential candidate in 1976, according to a high-ranking Republican source.

At a news conference Wednesday, Mr. Nixon refused to endorse anyone for that nomination.

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