

SFChronicle JUL 26 1973

State Board May Probe Nixon Home

Sacramento

The State Board of Equalization may be asked to authorize a formal investigation into the assessment of property taxes on President Nixon's San Clemente estate when it meets here on Monday.

Board chairman William Bennett, a liberal Democrat, has notified the four other board members, three of them Democrats, that he intends to make the request when the board convenes.

If such an investigation is voted by a majority of the board, which has authority to insure that property is fairly assessed, its staff could subpoena documents and witnesses.

The records would be used confidentially for the board's purposes of checking the equity of the assessment and would not be made public, a spokesman for the board said last night.

Bennett began an informal investigation after seeing recent statements that Mr. Nixon and his financial backers paid \$1.5 million for the property, that Mr. Nixon spent \$123,000 on improvements, and that an additional \$703,000 was spent on the property for other renovations and security measures.

The Orange county assessor's office estimated full value of the property at \$1,370,080 — or about \$1 million below the totals.

It has been estimated that the President may have escaped as much as \$60,000 in property taxes because of underassessment.

The Board of Equalization spokesman said last night that Bennett would need the votes of at least two other board members to authorize the formal investigation.

Our Correspondent