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Official-Connally

Turns Republican

HOUSTON — (AP) — John Connally made his long expected switch to the Republican Party today, insisting as he did that "I seek no office, political or appointive."

Connally, President Nixon's former treasury secretary and chairman in 1972 of "Democrats for Nixon," is nonetheless considered a potential candidate for the Republican presidential nomination in 1976.

Connally has been extravagantly praised by President Nixon as being capable of filling any job in the world, and Nixon has privately informed friends that Connally was his first choice as his successor.

No Discussions.

Connally insisted at a press conference today that he has not discussed with Nixon the possibility of rejoining the beleaguered administration.

The reason he's becoming a Republican, he said, is that the Democratic Party "has become more fragmented than at any time in my life. It has moved so far to the left that it has left many Americans."

It was that theme that Connally hammered at during the 1972 campaign, when his handsome, silver-haired countenance lit television screens in political advertisements nightly.

He said the timing of his announcement had nothing to do with the Watergate scandal.

No Pressure

Asked if there had been any pressure from the White House or from others in the administration to make his move at this time, he responded: "There has been no pressure whatever — directly or indirectly — non whatsoever."

The 56 year old Connally, a lawyer with many oil company clients, called the Watergate affair "a sordid mess."

"It was a silly, stupid, illegal act perpetrated by indi-

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viduals and not by the Republican Party. One should not condemn the Republican party because the individuals were Republicans."

Connally, a Texas governor and protege of the late President Johnson who was wounded during the assassination of President Kennedy in Dallas in 1963, said in a statement that "in our time, the Republican Party best represents the broad views of most Americans, whatever their formal political affiliations."

Vice President Agnew, who may be in contention with Connally for the 1976 Republican presidential nomination, said in Washington that he welcomed Connally to the Republican Party.

"He is a talented and personable man, an effective



JOHN B. CONNALLY
Joins the GOP

and articulate spokesman for traditional American values," Agnew said.

Sen. Charles H. Percy (R-Ill.), another potential Republican presidential candidate, welcomed Connally's decision and said it accords with his view "that we must constantly strive to broaden our party's base."