

NIXON SUGGESTS ONE 6-YEAR TERM FOR A PRESIDENT

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He Also Calls on Congress
to Consider House Tenure
of 4 Years Instead of 2

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WASHINGTON, May 15— President Nixon, responding to demands for election reforms as a result of the Watergate scandal, told Congressional leaders today that a single six-year term in the White House should be given serious consideration.

The President also suggested that it may be time to give thought to doubling the term of office for members of the House of Representatives from two years to four.

The suggestions were made by Mr. Nixon at a White House meeting in which he outlined his proposal for a 17-member, bipartisan election reform commission. The proposal will be presented formally to Congress tomorrow.

The meeting appeared to serve a second purpose, that of providing the beleaguered President with an opportunity to demonstrate his personal commitment to changes in election laws that would help head off future campaign scandals.

Scott Quotes President

Senator Hugh Scott of Pennsylvania, the Senate Republican leader, quoted Mr. Nixon as having declared that he felt "very strongly" about the need for a commission to recommend ways of assuring ethical campaigns for national office. Mr. Scott said that the President had stated:

"Most of the people in politics are trying to do a decent job and we all know it."

Senator Mike Mansfield of Montana, the Democratic leader, told reporters after the meeting that the word "Watergate" had not been used by Mr. Nixon, Vice President Agnew, Attorney General-designate Elliot L. Richardson or the 10 members of Congress who took part. The President, Mr. Mansfield said, "was ebullient."

Changes in the term of the

President and members of the House of Representatives would require an amendment to the Constitution.

Previous Effort Made

Mr. Mansfield and Senator George D. Aiken, Republican of Vermont, have sought unsuccessfully for years to interest their colleagues in an amendment that would limit Presidents to a single six-year term. But Congressional observers could not recall a previous instance in which an incumbent President had called for serious consideration of such a change.

Mr. Mansfield said that Mr. Nixon had raised the subject of Presidential tenure himself in a discussion of various possible election reforms.

A White House official said later today that the President had not specifically endorsed the six-year term, but that Mr. Nixon had said that it deserved serious examination and was an illustration of the broad scope that he proposed giving the election reform commission.

According to officials in the White House and to the account of the meeting given to

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reporters by Senator Scott, the President had said that the reform commission should study new controls to limit campaign contributions and spending, stricter laws requiring disclosure of political gifts, free time for candidates on radio and television and establishment of a permanent independent office to monitor enforcement of election laws.

Senator Scott has already introduced a bill to set up an independent election office. He said, however, that Mr. Nixon had taken note of that and other campaign proposals and had told the legislators that he did not want Congress to delay consideration of the reforms until the election commission made its own recommendations.

Gardner Opposes Panel

John W. Gardner, the chairman of Common Cause, declared in a statement that the citizens' lobbying group was opposed to the reform commission proposal.

"What is needed today is action, not a study commission that can only serve to stifle action," Mr. Gardner said. "There are clear steps to be taken now to restore integrity to the political process. There is no justification for delay."

Mr. Nixon is the third president in recent years to suggest lengthening the terms of Representatives. President Eisenhower said in a 1955 news conference that he favored a four-year house term and President Johnson received a thunderous ovation from House members when he proposed the four-year term in his 1966 State of the Union Address.

Congress has not acted on the suggestion, however, in part because of Senate opposition. Members of the Senate serve six-term, with one third of them elected every even-numbered year.

Democrat Is Critical

WASHINGTON, May 15 (UPI)—Sharply criticizing President Nixon's proposal for a bipartisan commission to study political campaigns, Democratic National Chairman Robert S. Strauss urged Democrats Tuesday to support election reforms that he said had been fully debated in Congress.

"I am personally more than a little concerned that this commission not be another delaying tactic and whitewash effort," Mr. Strauss said in a speech to the Capital Democratic Club.