

# Bush Tells G.O.P. Voters Know Party Is 'Uninvolved' in Watergate Scandal

By LINDA CHARLTON

Special to The New York Times

WASHINGTON, Sept. 10—The Republican National Committee, meeting for the first time since Watergate became a national issue, heard its chairman declare today that the voters know that the Republican party itself is uninvolved in the scandal—and that “the Nixon mandate” of 1972 “will be valid in the fall of '74.”

“The people,” said George Bush, the chairman, “want this Watergate behind us—in the courts, justice to prevail—but they don't like ‘piling on.’ They don't like ‘show biz’ proceedings, and most fundamentally, they want this Government and the President to be free to move forward,” he said.

Mr. Bush conceded that voters “are upset at food prices and inflation—and we must do better here—but they don't want a rigidly controlled economy; they know real incomes are up.”

To support his optimism, Mr. Bush pointed to poll results that, he said, demonstrated a rise in Republican party identification and a “drastic” decline in Democratic party identification, as well as Republican House gains in Alaska and Maryland and in state and local races in California, Mississippi and Pennsylvania.

The Maryland race, won by a conservative Republican, Robert E. Bauman, was “billed as a test of Watergate,” Mr. Bush said, “but when Bauman won, right here in range of a uni-issue press, the way it's been over the past few years, this side of it was discounted.” Mr. Bush's gibe at the press brought applause from the delegates, as did his reference to “show biz proceedings,” an apparent allusion to the Senate Watergate hearings.

Mr. Bush said that the Watergate theme of questions he faces around the country at news conferences has changed, largely because of “the vibrations from the people.” In addition, he said, “the President's press conferences have helped tremendously.”

Melvin R. Laird, the former Secretary of Defense who is now Mr. Nixon's top domestic adviser, also alluded to Mr. Nixon's recent new visibility, with an implicit promise that the President would continue to be accessible to the press and public. He spoke of Mr. Nixon's continuing to move “around this country” and continuing “his record of press conferences and press briefings.”

Later, after seven of the 11 members of the Cabinet had made brief and generally optimistic appearances, former Treasury Secretary John B. Connally held what was described not as a news conference but as a response to press requests.

The former Democrat and former Texas Governor, who is at the start of a 75-day speaking tour around the country, conceded as he has done previously that he had “thought about the possibility” of running for President. He said that “a couple of hundred people” had spoken to him about it, and added, “I wouldn't count that as my great groundswell.”

He was asked if he could imagine any circumstances under which a President might not abide by a Supreme Court decision. “Oh, sure,” he replied, adding that under the country's “three-pronged” system of government, each branch was co-equal.

“I don't want to get in the very delicate question of constitutional law,” he said, but

he went on, “there are times when a President would be justified in not acceding to the Supreme Court.”

He also said that while he “would hope” that he “would never knowingly violate any law,” he could “foresee a time when I would certainly ask for a wiretap on someone” if national security were involved.

He said that he could understand taping conversations under such circumstances and could “well believe” that he “would be extremely reluctant and perhaps unalterably reluctant to release them to anybody.”

Mr. Bush's speech was less rhetoric than the sort of categorized rendering of accounts that a board chairman might give to his stockholders, touching on various divisions of the national committee, its staff and plans.

He asked, and the committee later adopted a resolution supporting him in this, that the Republican Coordinating Committee be reconvened to be “a unifying force for our party” and to help supply “national party leadership on campaign reform” and other issues.

A report on the committee's finances showed that \$4.5-million had been raised from contributions since the beginning of the year, with 84 per cent being less than \$100. The committee treasurer, John M. Christie, said that the volume of contributions had been much greater during the first six months than since. Noting the number of small contributors, he said, “The fat cats are tomcatting in somebody else's backyard.”

He said that \$600,000 would be needed by the end of the year and that “quite frankly” he was not entirely confident of reaching that goal.