

Wide Range of Reaction by Leaders in Congress

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Washington

Vice President Spiro T. Agnew's resignation yesterday produced shock, anger, calls for national unity, sadness and demands that President Nixon nominate a successor of unimpeachable integrity.

Congressional leaders urged Mr. Nixon to send a nomination to Capitol Hill swiftly. The Senate called off a two-week recess scheduled to start tomorrow and members were put on notice to be ready to act on a nomination.

Many Democrats in Congress said they would not support any nominee to fill the office who is a 1976 presidential prospect — indicating Mr. Nixon will have a serious fight on his hands if he nominates California Governor Ronald Reagan or former Texas Governor John Connally.

However, the prime qualification — most members seemed to agree — was absolute integrity and an ability to inspire confidence.

"This is a day of unprecedented shame," Senator Frank Church (Dem-Idaho) said after Agnew pleaded no

contest to tax evasion charges in Baltimore, accepted a fine and two years probation and resigned. "To fill the vacancy, president Nixon must now send to Congress the name of a man of unimpeachable integrity. Nothing less will do."

House Democratic leader Thomas O'Neill of Massachusetts, suggested Senator George D. Alken of Vermont, the dean of Senate Republicans. Senator Hubert H. Humphrey (Dem-Minn.) mentioned former Senator John Sherman Cooper (Rep-Ky).

Some Democrats took the

news of Agnew's resignation with partisan bitterness.

"It is tragic," said Representative (Dem-Tex.), "not only for the administration but for one of our highest officials has, in effect, proceeded on the assumption that he was immune from the laws which govern everybody."

Representative John Brademas (Dem-Ind.) noted a "special irony" that Agnew was billed as the administration's chief law and order spokesman.

Agnew "deserves the compassion and respect of the nation" for sparing the ordeal of a ritual and constitutional struggle. Senator Walter Mondale (Dem-Minn.) said Agnew had "clearly acted in the best interest of the country" by resigning.

Senator Barry Goldwater (Rep-Ariz.), who has been mentioned as a possibility to succeed Agnew, charged that Agnew was "threatened shamefully by persons in responsible government position."

Goldwater, 1964 Republican presidential nominee

said: "In effect, he was tried and judged in a manner completely foreign to the proper pursuit of justice in the United States, a manner which convicted him by headlines and newscasts based on leaks of official information but before a single legal charge had been filed.

"I hope that never again in my lifetime will I witness this kind of abuse of an American citizen by people in responsible positions."

Governor Nelson A. Rockefeller of New York called the resignation a "personal tragedy" and re-

fused to speculate on whether he would be a candidate for the vacant office.

"There's an old South American saying," he said, "that nobody climbs to the top on the dead bodies of their friends."

House Speaker Carl Albert, now first in line for the presidency, issued a brief statement expressing "surprise and shock," at the resignation. "Under the Constitution, the matter is now in the hands of the President and I have no further comment," Albert said.

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