

ROCKEFELLER SEEN ACCEPTING OFFER

But His Advisers Stress
That He Wouldn't Forgo
'76 Presidency Bid

By FRANK LYNN

Governor Rockefeller would accept the Vice Presidency if it were offered to him with no qualifications, some of the Governor's closest advisers said yesterday.

While conceding that Mr. Rockefeller is probably a long shot for the appointment—and knows it—the sources close to him said that he would “jump at” the Vice Presidency as the best route to the Republican Presidential nomination in 1976.

However, these sources said, he would not accept the appointment if he had to agree to forgo a bid for the Presidency in 1976. Some influential Democrats and Republicans have proposed that he next Vice President should be a caretaker, who in the interest of national unity should agree not to use the office as a springboard for the presidency.

The Governor himself indicated his interest in the Vice Presidency at a hastily called news conference within an hour after he learned of the resignation of Vice President Agnew.

Instead of brushing off the Vice Presidency as “standby equipment,” as he has frequently done in the past, Mr. Rockefeller spoke of “a new situation” and the “serious consideration” he would give to any presidential request.

He also opposed the notion of a caretaker Vice President for the next three years. He said there were no such qualifications in the 25th amendment that provided for the President to fill a vice presidential vacancy.

Senator Jacob K. Javits, Republican of New York, a close ally of the Governor, also opposed any “sterilizing” of the new Vice President to insure that he had no presidential ambitions. “That would be cheat the country,” said the state’s senior Senator, who is a strong supporter of the Governor’s national ambitions.

At least two New York Republican Congressmen — Peter Peyser of Westchester and Benjamin A. Gilman of Midletown — proposed the appointment of Mr. Rockefeller.

Whether or not Mr. Rockefeller does win the Vice Presidential appointment, the resignation of Agnew does remove a potential competitor of the Governor for the 1976 Republican nomination.

But, the Governor showed no satisfaction at the news conference. Instead, he was somber, tight-lipped and frequently referred to the Agnew “tragedy.”

He also referred to “an old expression in Latin America that nobody climbs to the top on the dead body of a friend.”

However, the news conference itself was viewed as a sign of the Governor’s interest in the Agnew post. Most politicians merely issued statements reacting to the resigna-

tion.

Ironically, Mr. Agnew, when Governor of Maryland had been the first major non-New Yorker to back Mr. Rockefeller’s presidential bid in 1968. But he shifted to Mr. Nixon after the Governor temporarily dropped out of the race without even informing Mr. Agnew before his public announcement.