

New Vice President

Nixon's Selection --

The Names Pour In

GOP Leaders Submit List of Favorites--Now It's a Guessing Game

Washington

President Nixon held intensive consultations with his staff and political leaders yesterday on whom he should nominate as Vice President.

Yesterday evening he flew to his mountaintop retreat at Camp David to make his decision, which an assistant said is expected "soon."

Before he left, Republican leaders, at his request, heaped scores of suggested names on his desk.

After a day of canvassing preferences among Republican members of the House and Senate, governors, and members of the Republican National Committee across the country, Senate GOP leader Hugh Scott, House leader Gerald R. Ford and GOP national chairman George Bush took the results to the White House at sundown, as Mr. Nixon had requested.

CHOICES

Included were sealed envelopes containing the three top choices of 163 of the 192 GOP House members, about two dozen Republican senators and more than 130 GOP governors and national committeemen who had telephoned or wired their picks to Republican headquarters.

Some sources inside the White House indicated they believed Mr. Nixon already had decided on his favorites for the job.

Some congressional Republicans recalled privately that Mr. Nixon had made the same sort of canvass at

the party's 1968 convention in Miami Beach — only to tap Spiro Agnew as his running mate, the man nobody had recommended.

DENIAL

But White House press secretary Ronald L. Ziegler denied that the President has made any decision.

"He has not decided who or when it will be," said Ziegler after the President left by helicopter, alone except for a military aide and Secret Service guards.

Ziegler, would say only that the President will announce his decision "soon," indicating that it will come before the end of the week or early next week.

As the President departed without leaving the slightest public indication as to whom he might pick Washington was like a political conven-

tion awash with rumors, suggestions and campaigns for nominees.

The only thing that seemed certain was that if the President picked former Treasury Secretary John B. Connally, the nomination would be rejected by the Democratically - controlled Congress.

FAVORITE

House minority leader

Ford of Michigan, who is emerging as a kind of favorite son candidate of Congress, told a House Republican conference that the President, in a meeting with congressional leaders Wednesday, laid down three broad criteria for his selection:

- A person with the ability to be President;
- A person with a reasonable chance to be approved by a simple majority of both houses of Congress, as required under the 25th Amendment;
- A person in tune with President Nixon's foreign policy.

A White House spokesman said this was a fair assessment.

The Nixon criteria encompassed a broad range of politicians and public officials,

subject to individual interpretation, and it invited an outpouring of campaigns by various groups and interests.

CARETAKER

There were indications from the White House that the President would avoid, if he could, appointing a "caretaker" for the office, one who would be expected to only fill out the office of President should Mr. Nixon die or become disabled before 1977 and would not be a contender for President in the next election.

This gave strength to campaigns for such figures as New York Governor Nelson Rockefeller, Connally and California Governor Ronald Reagan.

Melvin R. Laird, the President's chief adviser for domestic affairs, surveyed members of both parties in Congress and found that next to Ford, who has not been considered a presidential contender, the names most mentioned were those of

Connally and Rockefeller.

Representative Peter A. Peyser (Rep-N.Y.), trying to start a boom for Rockefeller, said he talked to the governor yesterday morning and "he told me he is actively interested and is interested in serving the country this way (as vice president) and he feels he can provide help to the President to carry out his policies."

CONNALLY

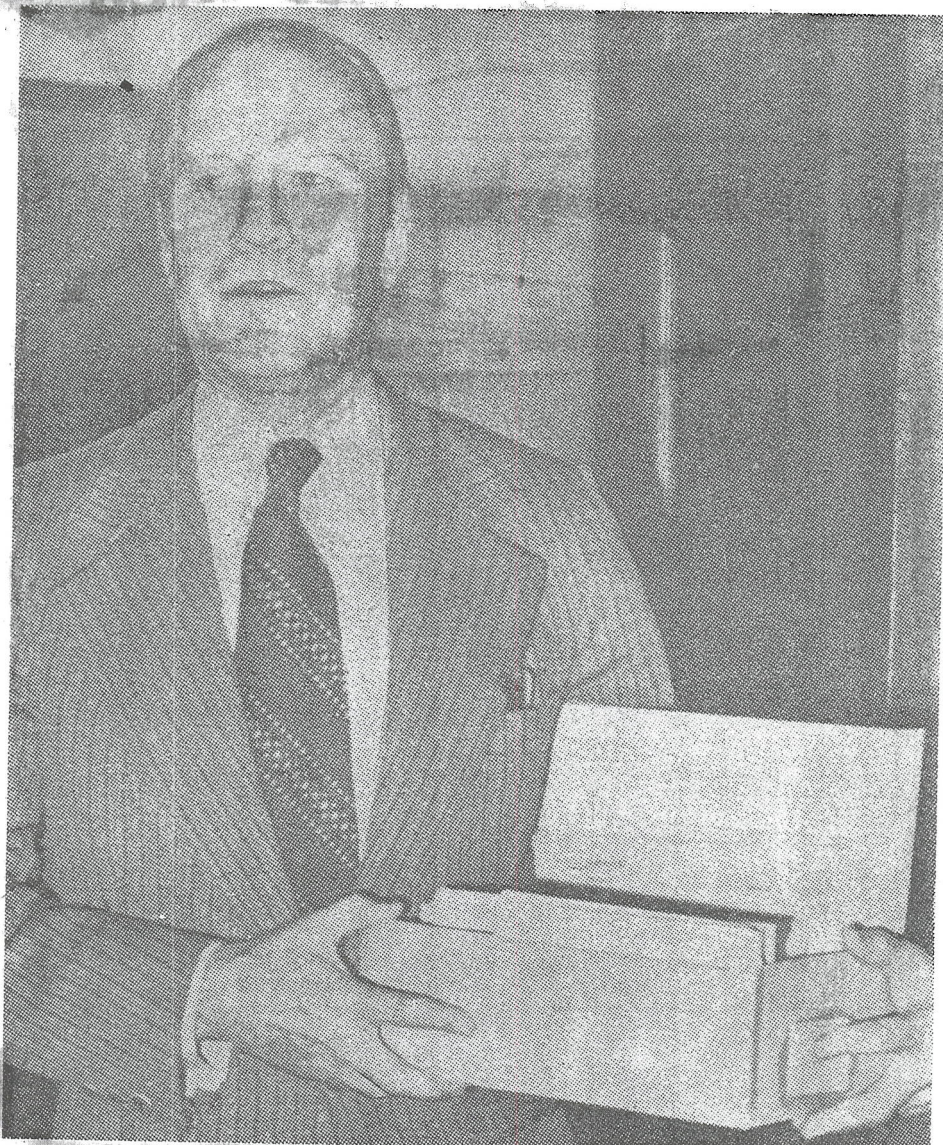
While a number of Republicans were campaigning for Connally, there was a definite antipathy toward the former Texas governor in both houses of Congress, not only among Democrats but among some Republicans.

Democratic leaders at a meeting yesterday said they are adamantly opposed to Connally on the ground that he had shifted to the Republicans last spring and is thus considered a traitor to the Democrats.

"There is only one man I'd never vote for," said Thomas P. O'Neill of Massachusetts, the majority whip of the House. "That's John Connally."

The boom for Ford was considered more an expression of loyalty by his friends in the Congress than a serious effort to make him vice president.

New York Times



AP Wirephoto

REP. GERALD FORD AND A BOX FULL OF SUGGESTIONS
The House GOP leader himself is considered a possibility