

PERCY BIDS G.O.P. SHED WATERGATE

He Warns of Possible Nixon
Ouster—Talk Omits Direct
Reference to President

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CHICAGO, March 29 — As Middle Western Republicans gathered here this foggy week-end in search of some way out of Watergate, Senator Charles H. Percy asserted that their most immediate problem was the possibility that President Nixon might be forced out of office.

The Illinois Republican, without mentioning the word "impeachment," told party officials from 13 Middle Western states that the party had to find some way to disassociate itself from Watergate.

"We must make it unmistakably clear that Watergate does not represent the traditional values and beliefs of the Republican party and prove that our party's commitment to law and orderly process is not an empty promise," Mr. Percy declared.

He has already announced that he is "interested" in the Republican nomination for President.

His warnings on Watergate were made at a reception he gave for those attending the two-day conference at the Regency Hyatt O'Hare hotel.

No Mention of Nixon

Mr. Percy described the talk

earlier as "the keynote" for the conference. The meeting had the aura of a convention, with possible Republican Presidential candidates scheduled to talk.

Beginning tomorrow, Vice President Ford, former Gov. Nelson A. Rockefeller and California Gov. Ronald Reagan are on the agenda.

In his speech tonight, Mr. Percy delivered about 2,000 words without mentioning the name "Nixon." He referred once to "the President of the United States," but then talked only in general terms of the party and "the administration."

A Percy assistant noted that President Nixon spoke for 20 minutes at a Republican fundraiser earlier this week without mentioning the word "Watergate."

"For the next two days, I think it is important that we deal with the real world, with the political facts of life, if we are to avoid political disaster," Mr. Percy declared tonight.

He deplored the fact that in the Middle West the Republican party held only 5 out of 13 governorships, and 7 of 26 Senate seats.

'Agonizing for Us'

"Our immediate problem, of course, is that the leader of our party, the President of the United States, is in danger of being forced from office," Mr. Percy said. "The question that now confronts us, both individually and collectively, is how we can constructively respond to this agonizing situation—agonizing for him and agonizing for us."

He said Republican Congressional candidates could run this fall on the foreign policy accomplishments of "the Republican Administration" and its program of revenue-sharing with states and cities.

"But first let us reject Watergate in all its dimensions," Mr. Percy said.