

Nixon Still Has \$1.5 Million in Papers

By Lou Cannon

Washington Post Staff Writer

Despite the White House claim that President Nixon is "almost virtually wiped out" by an Internal Revenue Service ruling that is costing him \$467,000 in back taxes and interest, the President retains pre-presidential papers valued by his appraiser at \$1.5 million.

Ralph G. Newman, the Chicago appraiser who was hired by Mr. Nixon's attorneys to evaluate these papers, put a \$2,012,000 figure on the worth of the entire collection in 1969. This included the \$500,000 worth of material for which the President took the tax deductions that this week were disallowed by the IRS.

Mr. Nixon has far greater assets, though they have never been calculated,

in the papers of his presidency. These papers presumably will be his own when he leaves office, to sell or donate as he chooses.

"Since the time of George Washington it has been customary for Presidents of the United States to treat their papers as their own personal property," the staff report to the congressional Joint Committee on Internal Revenue Taxation said this week. "The historical precedents, taken together with the provisions set forth in the Presidential Libraries Act, suggest that the papers of President Nixon are considered his personal property rather than public property."

Presumably, this also would apply to the taped presidential conversations, which the White House originally said were made for historical purposes.

Mr. Nixon himself has given some indications that he regards the Newman appraisal of his papers as somewhat conservative. Last Nov. 17 he told the Associated Press managing editors that if the IRS rules against him "I will be glad to have the papers back and will pay the tax because I think they are worth more than that."

The President did not get back the papers he donated because of the IRS ruling. However, evidence uncovered by the joint committee staff in its investigation of Mr. Nixon's tax deductions suggests that the most valuable of his correspondence remains in the undonated stacks of material that are being stored in the National Archives.

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Months after Mr. Nixon supposedly donated his papers to the National Archives, the President at Newman's suggestion set aside letters from such important historical figures as Winston Churchill and John F. Kennedy.

On Nov. 7, 1969, Newman wrote Mr. Nixon saying that the entire collection of papers, memorabilia and books was worth more than the \$2 million appraisal he had given.

"It is my recommendation that certain of the more important letters, which are valuable, considered either as historical documents or autograph manuscripts, should be removed" from the general files

and stored in a special vault, Newman wrote.

The letters are now held in special storage for the President in a high-security room in the archives.

Mary Livingston, the assistant archivist for presidential libraries, said in a statement to the committee that Newman had "expressed great interest" in the general correspondence file when he visited the archives on Nov. 3, 1969, and "asked particularly to see letters from various important people."

"He said the general correspondence would be a good file to be deeded, but said some letters should be retained by the President and not deeded," Mrs. Livingston recalled. "In particular he wanted to retain . . . communications from President Kennedy, President John-

son, President Hoover, former Vice President Humphrey, J. Edgar Hoover, Chief Justice Warren, and the Honorable Sam Rayburn.

"I suggested that correspondence with Martin Luther King also be retained by the President because there were some very interesting letters and memoranda in the file on King," Mrs. Livingston continued. "Mr. Newman agreed that it would be a good file to retain."

The joint committee report suggests that because of "the hurried way" in which the materials for the 1969 gift were assembled, some of the materials actually donated many not have been as valuable as Newman thought them to be.

The report cites the donation of three boxes of material deal-

ing with then-Soviet Premier Khrushchev's visits to the United States and apparently valued at \$15,000. Unknown to Newman, the boxes contained only files of old newspaper clippings.

Despite the White House statement Thursday that the IRS ruling would probably make a borrower out of Mr. Nixon, the White House announced yesterday that any money donated to help pay his income taxes will be returned.

The comment came in response to various campaigns launched to send money to the President, including one by Florida state GOP Chairman L. E. (Tommy) Thomas. He said he wanted a million Floridians to mail \$1 to the White House and "let the President know you think he is one in a million."