

'Resign' Speculation Growing

Washington

President Nixon met with Vice President Gerald R. Ford privately for an hour yesterday as pressure for Mr. Nixon to resign grew and White House aides continued to insist he had no intention of doing so.

The meeting with Ford immediately fanned rumors that the President was contemplating some major step, but both the White House and the vice president flatly denied that his resignation was even discussed.

Gerald L. Warren, deputy presidential press secretary, said Mr. Nixon did not have to raise the question because Ford "knows very well the President's intention and feeling on the matter, and that the President intends to complete his term."

The Nixon - Ford meeting came against a backdrop of growing rumor that the President, despite all denials, will step aside.

For the second straight day, reports that Mr. Nixon would hold a sudden news conference, or would make an unscheduled television address flooded the White House and were denied by Warren.

He also denied reports that the cabinet was being assembled to hear from the President, or that Secretary of State Henry A. Kissinger was flying back to Washington to receive the President's resignation, as stipulated by law.

Ronald Ziegler, the president's press secretary, telephoned the New York Times last night to issue this statement in response to a Times story on resignation rumors.

"The city of Washington is full of rumors. All that have been presented to me today

are false, and the one that heads the list is the one that says President Nixon intends to resign.

"His attitude is one of determination that he will not be driven out of office by ru-

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mor, speculation, excessive charges or hypocrisy. He is up to the battle, he intends to fight it, and he feels he has a personal and constitutional responsibility to do so."

Ford went from the meeting in Mr. Nixon's Executive Office Building hideaway directly to Buffalo, N.Y., for a speaking engagement. At a press conference there, he, too, said the subject of resignation had not come up "but I could infer that he has no intention of resigning. In my judgment President Nixon will continue in office."

The same assurances also came from an aide to Pat Nixon and from White House political advisers Dean Burch and Anne Armstrong.

Mrs. Nixon's press secretary, Helen McCain Smith, speaking for her boss, said "the decision has been made that he (Mr. Nixon) won't quit," and she said Mrs. Nixon "can't understand the Republican leadership" for failing to rally behind her husband.

Burch said on NBC's "Today Show." "I don't think the President has any intention of resigning. He's aware of the concern (but) (A), he was elected to a job and (B), he is convinced he has not committed any impeachable offense." To quit now, "would imply at least" that he was guilty of some wrongdoing, Burch said.

And Mrs. Armstrong in advance of a speech to the Ohio Association of Broadcasters in Willoughby, Ohio, said the President would "absolutely not" resign. To do so, she said, "would be a very bad thing for this country."

Ford said in Buffalo that he had discussed foreign and domestic policy matters with Mr. Nixon and "procedures that would be fol-

lowed" in the impeachment inquiry now underway against the President in the House Judiciary Committee. The vice president said he expected "a close vote" in the committee but if the full House based its decision on the facts a majority would not vote for impeachment.

Ford's visit with the President, not on either man's schedule as of late Thursday, caused a stir not only because of continued resignation rumors around Washington but in light of Ford's implied criticism of the edited White House transcripts on Watergate earlier Thursday in a speech in Charleston, Ill.

In that speech, the vice president had seemed to suggest that deletions by the White House contributed to a "crisis of confidence" in the federal government. "While it may be easy to delete characterization from the printed page," he said then, "we cannot delete characterization from people's minds with a wave of the hand."

Ford was asked at the Buffalo press conference whether the President had talked to him about this and other critical remarks in the Illinois speech. Mr. Nixon, he said, had told him only "maybe I was working too hard and should do less traveling."

The vice president is undertaking a speaking schedule totaling 34 appearances in 11 states in May. Today he is speaking at Texas A&M and to Republican groups in Houston and Dallas. On Monday he goes to Louisiana and Florida and then to Honolulu at the end of next week.

Ford said he knew of no areas "where there is a sharp disagreement between me and the President." But he said "I will continue to be my own man."

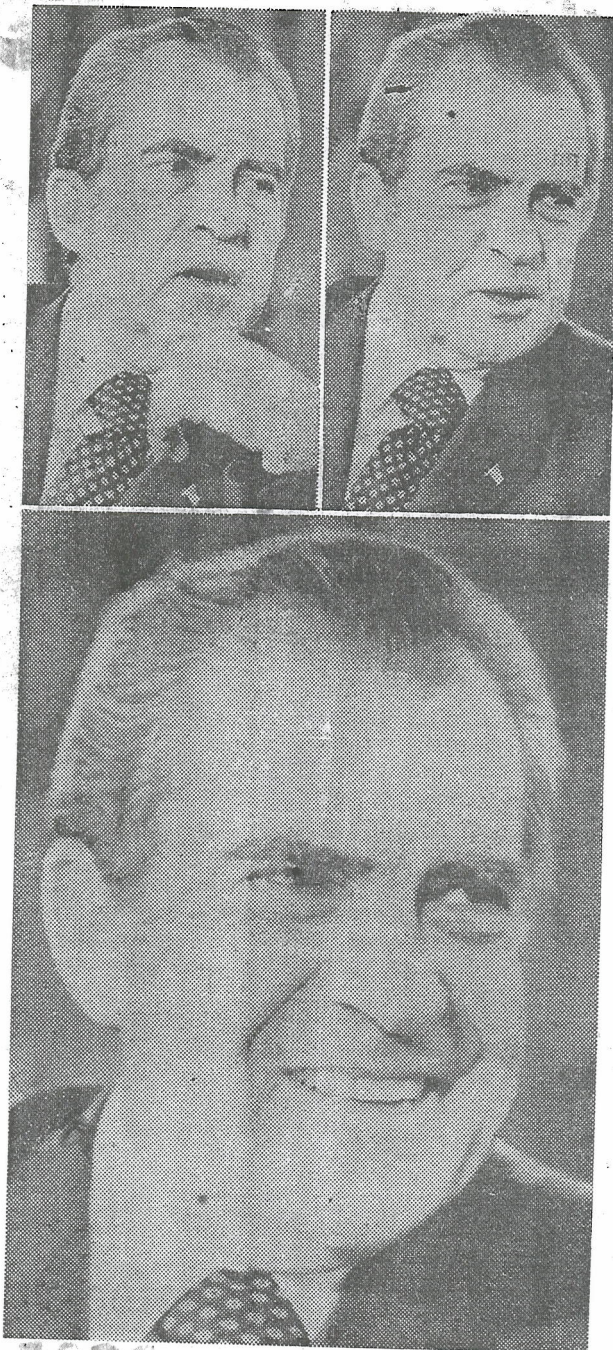
After his press conference, the vice president spoke at a lunch given by the Buffalo Building and Construction Trades Council.

Secretary of Labor Peter J. Brennan, introducing Ford, referred to him at one point as "the president," to

laughter and applause from the audience.

"There'll be a hell of a lot of talk about that," Brennan said. "It was just a Freudian slip."

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AP Wirephoto

President Nixon at a White House meeting yesterday—as resignation rumors spread over Washington