

Difficult

JUL 30 1974

Questions for Ford

Sorrow at Reinecke Conviction

By Michael Harris

Vice President Gerald R. Ford said here yesterday he thought the decision on whether California Lieutenant Governor Ed Reinecke should resign following his conviction for perjury should be left to Reinecke.

Ford also told reporters that he regards former Secretary of the Treasury John B. Connally innocent unless proven guilty, that he has no idea when the indictments of prominent administration figures will stop and that President Nixon will not resign.

"I feel very sad about Ed Reinecke in this situation," said Ford, who formerly served in Congress with the lieutenant governor.

"I noted that two of the three charges made against him were dropped and he was convicted on the third. I think it's up to him to decide whether he should stay in office or not."

The flood of questions about political difficulties directed at Ford during a press conference at the St. Francis Hotel tended to obscure the reason Ford had come to the city — his acceptance of an invitation to talk about racial equality before the National Urban League.

Occasionally a black reporter was able to break into the questioning long enough to ask questions of concern to the Urban League, a predominantly black civil rights organization whose main emphasis has been improving job opportunities for minorities.

The reporter asked at one point why the administration was permitting unemployment to rise.



THE URBAN LEAGUE'S VERNON JORDAN AND GERALD FORD
They conferred before Ford addressed the civil rights group here

"I think you have to recognize we are going through a transition period and we're moving into a peacetime era and a much more sophisticated society," Ford replied.

"You're going to have some losses on a temporary basis, but opportunities in the next few years, with better education (now available) for blacks, are obviously going to be better."

But then the questioning swung back to politics.

Ford told a questioner he did not know whether an impeachment vote by the House would move President Nixon to take his case to the American people by television and radio. But Ford added he regarded trial by the Senate as a better forum for presenting the facts.

Questioned again about Connally, who is now a Republican, Ford replied, "I think it is tragic a man with the fine public record of John Connally is indicted." Ford said he was acquainted with Connally "from my own observations, dating back to when (he) was the Democratic governor of Texas."

In his luncheon talk to the Urban League, Ford said that when he was confirmed as vice president, a civil rights leader had said, "You

can put all the black and brown folks Jerry Ford knows in the trunk of a Pinto and still have room for the GOP elephant."

After the laughter faded Ford said, "Although not what you might like it to be, my civil rights record is anything but negative, and it is a long way from standing in the doorway of a school house in defiance of a federal court order in an attempt to deny black children a quality education."

Ford said the Nixon administration had appointed far too many black leaders to important government

posts to be accused of "tokenism." As evidence, he listed officials — seven still in the government. The other three, James Farmer, Arthur Fletcher and Samuel Jackson, resigned after protesting administration civil rights policies.

Ford offered an optimistic view of the future.

"This nation has raised the last generation of American citizens that will see some of its members denied opportunity to find and hold decent jobs and have productive careers through no fault of their own," the vice president said.

"Minorities are no longer marching and staging sit-ins to gain access to lunch counters and other public accommodations. The thrust in the '70s is to own some of those lunch counters and other business enterprises."

The last sentence was greeted with applause from many of Ford's listeners.

The vice president, who flew here from Washington, left for speaking appearances in Las Vegas, Reno and San Diego immediately following his talk. He is due back in Washington at 5 a.m. tomorrow.