

NIXON REPORTED

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UNDECIDED ON RESIGNING; HIS STAFF SAID TO WANT HIM TO STEP DOWN; GOLDWATER SEES ONLY 15 VOTES IN SENATE

Senators Unable to Agree On Any Move Over Nixon

NYTimes

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WASHINGTON, Aug. 7—In an atmosphere of suspense fed by swirling rumors, the Senate leadership met throughout the day today to discuss the fate of the Nixon Presidency.

One Senator, who had met with Republican leaders, said they were convinced that President Nixon should resign and would be impeached, convicted and removed from office if he did not do so.

But the leaders were said to have reached no conclusion about what, if any, action they should take.

Meanwhile, Senator Barry Goldwater, the Arizona Republican, told newsmen in his home state by telephone late this afternoon that he had informed Mr. Nixon that he could count on no more than 15 certain votes for acquittal in the event of a Senate impeachment trial.

One possible action discussed by Senate leaders today, according to a ranking Senator, was that the leadership support a "sense of the Senate" resolution stating that the President should be given immunity from prosecution if he should resign.

Members of Congress are now convinced that they do

not have the authority to pass legislation granting the President immunity, but a "sense of the Senate" resolution presumably would carry weight with the Justice Department and the special prosecutor's office.

Many Democrats, however, including Senator Robert C. Byrd of West Virginia, the Democratic whip, are known to be opposed to immunity for Mr. Nixon.

The immunity question was brought up at an afternoon meeting in the office of Senator Hugh Scott of Pennsylvania, the Republican leader.

In addition to Senator Scott, the meeting was attended by Senator Robert P. Griffin of Michigan, the Republican whip;

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Stock Prices Climb

Stock prices continued to climb yesterday amid widening conjecture that President Nixon would resign. The Dow-Jones industrial average advanced 23.78 points. Meanwhile, the nation's leading economists have again lowered their hopes for the United States economy in 1974. Details on Page 47.

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Senator John G. Tower of Texas, chairman of the Republican Policy Committee; Senator Barry Goldwater, Republican of Arizona; Senator Mike Mansfield, Democrat of Montana, the majority leader, and Representative John J. Rhodes, Republican of Arizona, the House minority leader.

Rumors Mount

"Something's going to happen, but it's not what you expect," Senator Griffin told a reporter after the meeting. The others would say nothing.

That meeting and others led to rumors of thunderous proportions.

Senator Robert Dole, the Kansas Republican, told reporters that the "word was passed" that Senators should stick close to their television sets to get the news, and a set was turned on in the Senate Republican cloakroom.

Asked if something big was about to happen, Senator Dole replied:

"It sure feels like it. There are too many people walking back and forth for something not to be going on."

Talk that the President was about to resign reached its height this afternoon after newspaper and television reports that resignation would come today or tonight.

Many of these reports seemed to be based on alleged comments by Senator Goldwater.

The Phoenix Gazette reported, for example, that the President would resign today, and a person who knew how the paper developed the article said that it had been encouraged by Senator Goldwater and Representative Rhodes.

Senator Goldwater denied the reports and took to the floor of the Senate to denounce the press.

Harsh Criticism

He declared the reports by the National Broadcasting Company and the American Broadcasting Company that he had been to the White House were lies, and, glaring at the press gallery overlooking the Senate chamber, he concluded:

"If the American television people and the American press

cannot start to be honest in this country, God help us. You are a rotten bunch."

Senator Goldwater then stalked off the floor to applause from the visitors' gallery.

Senate Republicans met for two hours this morning, principally to go over legislative matters and committee assignments, but the question of the President's difficulties was discussed at some length.

According to one Republican Senator, about half of those at the meeting said that a delegation should go to the White House to urge Mr. Nixon to resign. But others opposed such an effort. Senator Norris Cotton, Republican of New Hampshire said that such a visit "might make him more convinced that he should fight."

Just before the Senate went into session this morning, Senator Mansfield told reporters that he believed the Senate should proceed with an impeachment trial even if the President resigned.

"The constitutional process

should be carried through one way or another," the Senator said. "It has gone on so long we have no choice."

Republicans Opposed

The Speaker of the House, Representative Carl Albert, Democrat of Oklahoma, said that there were "reasons for going ahead" with a House impeachment vote and a Senate trial, but he added, "whether we do it is another thing."

Republican members of Congress, however, were virtually united in believing that the impeachment process should stop if the President left office voluntarily.

"Concert for the morale of the people of the country and the Government of this country should prompt us not to go any further if the President should voluntarily resign," Senator Cotton declared.

Meanwhile, the Senate Rules Committee agreed to permit a Senate impeachment trial to be televised.

While most Senators of both

parties seemed convinced that Mr. Nixon would resign, one Senator—Carl Curtis, Republican of Nebraska—remained a stalwart supporter.

He declared that there was so much "propaganda, pressure and emotion" in Washington that Congress should take a 30-day recess "on the condition that the members of Congress spend the time with their constituents."