

Nixon Is 'Paper' Millionaire

Washington

President Nixon leaves office with a bright financial future virtually guaranteed by his personal ownership of rooms full of presidential documents that will be worth millions of dollars.

Although saddled at the moment with huge bills for back taxes and mortgages, and although his savings were depleted by recent tax and mortgage payments, Mr. Nixon's presidential and pre-presidential papers will have great value should he decide to sell them.

In addition, Mr. Nixon will get a series of benefits he would have lost had he been impeached and convicted. He will receive:

- A \$60,000 annual lifetime presidential pension.
- Up to \$96,000 a year in government allowances for staff assistance.
- Free office space.

His wife, should she survive him, would get a \$20,000-a-year pension.

These benefits, first authorized by Congress in 1958 for all former presidents, were provided to insure that former Presidents would not be forced to undertake demeaning tasks to support themselves. The presidential pension is set at the salary of Cabinet members—now \$60,000 a year—and would rise automatically in the event Cabinet salaries are increased.

On top of these special presidential benefits, Mr. Nixon might be eligible for about \$18,000 in civil service retirement benefits as a result of his service in the House, Senate and vice presidency.

The President would also be entitled to Secret Service protection for as long as he wants it, free mailing privileges for non-political mail and any Social Security benefits he might have earned while in private law practice.

But the great bulk of his financial assets clearly lies in boxes of documents temporarily stored at the National Archives in Washington. According to a recent report of the Joint Committee on Internal Revenue, the presidential papers apparently belong to Mr. Nixon personally:

"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 historical precedents, taken together with the provisions set forth in the Presidential Libraries Act, suggest that the papers of President Nixon are con-

sidered his personal property rather than public property," the report said.

A spokesman for the National Archives said that about 13,000 cubic feet of Mr. Nixon's presidential documents are in storage there.

While their value has not been calculated, about 1200 cubic feet of Mr. Nixon's pre-presidential papers were appraised at about \$2 million by Chicago appraiser Ralph G. Newman.

"If the pre-presidential papers were worth that much," said an Internal Revenue Taxation committee staffer, "then these (presidential papers) are probably worth \$3 million. I'm just guessing, of course, but they're worth a lot."

"If he owns the White House tapes, it would probably go up (in value) to \$5 million," the staffer said.

"This talk of Nixon going out a pauper is crazy," said a joint taxation committee staffer. "He's a millionaire."

In addition to his presidential papers, Mr. Nixon still controls about three-quarters of his pre-presidential documents, estimated by his own appraiser to be worth about \$1.5 million. "If he needs any money," said the committee staff member, "he can raise a million and a half out of those pre-presidential papers. That makes him a rich man by ordinary standards."

In 1969, Mr. Nixon donated about a quarter of his pre-presidential documents to the archives, taking a \$576,000 income tax deduction that was later declared improper by both the Internal Revenue Service and the joint taxation committee.

Partly because of this ruling, Mr. Nixon faces a variety of pressing but probably temporary financial difficulties. In April, he and his wife agreed to pay \$284,706 in back taxes for the years 1970, 1971, and 1972. Looming ahead is the payment of

\$148,081 in unpaid taxes for 1969, which he said he will pay although the statute of limitations had run out.

Then in July, Mr. Nixon was unable to meet the largest and last payment on his portion of the San Clemente property. Although he managed to pay part of it, he still owes about \$188,000, now due next January 15,

and he is reportedly looking into ways to refinance the payment in order to spread it out over several years.

Once out of office, moreover, Mr. Nixon could face a number of law suits to further drain his wealth. And the possibility lingers that the special Watergate prosecutor may bring a tax fraud charge against Mr. Nixon,

which could result in a \$196,000 civil fraud penalty.

Finally, the President faces the possibility of disbarment in his home state of California, where action is now pending. If disbarred, he would be unable to practice law, drying up his main source of income in his years outside public office.

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