

# SPECULATION RIFE ON VICE PRESIDENT

AUG 9 1974

Some Ford Associates Say  
Selecting a Successor  
Could Take Weeks

NYTimes

By CHRISTOPHER LYDON

Special to The New York Times

WASHINGTON, Aug. 8 — Potentially the most revealing and most important decision of Gerald R. Ford's Presidential debut — his choice of a successor in the Vice Presidency — was a much-discussed mystery here today.

Close friends of Mr. Ford continued to feed speculation about more than a dozen possible candidates. But none of the friends claimed to have discussed the Vice-Presidential question with Mr. Ford or to be speaking for him on it. A number of Ford associates thought he might hold off the decision for days or even weeks.

"Everybody's on tenterhooks up here," a Senator remarked this afternoon in a telephone interview from the Republican cloakroom, "but I think they're wasting their time. It's going to be a week or two. So far I'd say he's a loner on this issue."

Former Defense Secretary Melvin R. Laird, a Ford counselor in the House for more than a decade, was being quoted again today as saying he believes that Nelson A. Rockefeller, the former New York Governor, would be the best

Continued on Page 4, Column 1

Continued From Page 1, Col. 1

choice to reassure foreign nations, heal the Republican party and attract fresh talent to the depleted Federal establishment.

Yet many other Republicans were observing that a Rockefeller Vice-Presidency, as Mr. Laird pictures it, might overwhelm Mr. Ford and his staff. And Mr. Laird's open effort to broker the Rockefeller selection was the subject of wide second-guessing, even among Mr. Rockefeller's senior staff.

"Laird could be throwing up a signal; he may have been expressing his personal choice," said one seasoned Republican politician who is close to both Mr. Laird and Mr. Ford. He added that Mr. Laird himself was a "definite contender" for the Vice Presidency, "and he ought to be."

Mr. Rockefeller, on vacation at Seal Harbor, Me., made no comment on the transition in Washington today and, according to a spokesman with him, heard "not a word from Mr. Ford or the President."

"He hasn't really talked to anyone," said Joseph Canzeri, a member of Mr. Rockefeller's personal staff. "I think the Gov-

ernor's concerned about the country. He's saddened by events, as all Americans are. It's a sad day."

George Bush, the chairman of the Republican National Committee, met with Mr. Ford this afternoon, a Bush spokesman announced, in "a private talk looking to the future of the party and the country."

Friends of Mr. Bush, a Texan, believe that he would have political appeal among the party faithful, particularly in the South and West, and they thought today that he might well have expressed an interest in the Vice-Presidency. Mr. Bush had flown back from California today after the cancellation of a Republican fund-raising telethon in Los Angeles; he was not responding to press inquiries himself.

### Others Mentioned

An aide to Elliot L. Richardson remarked that the former Attorney General could bring as much brains and "class" as Mr. Rockefeller could to a Ford Administration, and that he had the advantage of being a "team player" while Mr. Rockefeller

had always been a star in his own right.

A spokesman for Senator Barry Goldwater of Arizona observed that angry passions of the Goldwater-Rockefeller fight for the Republican Presidential nomination in 1964 had virtually died in the intervening decade. Accordingly, Mr. Goldwater's aide volunteered, the Arizona conservative would have no objection to a choice of the New York liberal. In turn, he suggested, the Rockefeller Republicans should have no objection to a choice of Senator Goldwater, who declared yesterday that he would accept the Vice-Presidency if Mr. Ford offered it.

Other Republicans being mentioned in the guessing today were Senator Howard H. Baker Jr. of Tennessee, Representative John B. Anderson of Illinois and Governor Ronald Reagan of California. But there was speculation, too, from the Vice President's confidants that Mr. Ford might reach outside the ranks of active politicians—to the Supreme Court, for example, or to a retired Republican leader like William W. Scranton, the former Governor of Pennsylvania.