

Ford Ready to Accept The Nixon Tape Bill

Washington

President Ford will accept the will of Congress to nullify his agreement granting former President Nixon custody of his presidential tapes and papers but may not actually sign the bill, White House officials said yesterday.

Officials said it has not been decided whether Mr. Ford would sign the legislation or simply permit it to become law without his signature.

Mr. Nixon's attorney, Jack Miller, met with White House aides yesterday and apparently argued strongly for a Ford veto of the bill. As he left the White House, Miller called the legislation "clearly unconstitutional."

Some White House law-

yers also believe the legislation was enacted too quickly and is too all-encompassing. It would even cover Mr. Nixon's dictabelts, on which he recorded his most intimate thoughts.

The legislation arrived at the White House earlier this week. It would nullify a September 7 agreement Mr. Ford signed with the General Services Administration that stated the tapes and papers were Mr. Nixon's property and after five years of joint custody with the government could be disposed of as he wished.

Congress acted to prevent the movement of the tapes to a government storehouse near San Clemente, so they would be available for Watergate prosecutors or oth-

ers with official need to review them.

Under the legislation Mr. Nixon still would have access to his papers but would not be allowed to remove them from government custody.

Congress avoided taking a position on the ownership of the Nixon tapes. In announcing his agreement with the GSA last September, Mr. Ford made public a letter from Attorney General William B. Saxbe which said that by tradition such records are the personal belongings of a President.

The legislation also sets up a commission to determine the ultimate ownership of the materials.

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