

Packing It Up for Mr. Nixon

By Maxine Cheshire

In response to recent criticism from Ron Ziegler and others, the Ford administration is packing up some personal memorabilia belonging to former President Richard M. Nixon and will ask permission today from the U.S. District Court here to forward it to him.

The items in question—including his collections of elephants, political cartoons and gavels—were left behind in his small Executive Office Building hideaway after he departed for San Clemente.

All are supposed to have been owned by him prior to his taking the oath of office in 1969 or else sent to him in care of the White House after he had left office in 1974.

Ziegler maintained that certain White House aides were being "vindictive" in refusing to return to Nixon such personal mementos as his high school papers and old Christmas card lists.

Nixon's lawyers contend that such personal memorabilia should be excluded from the continuing legal battles over ownership of tapes, documents, and other "presidential materials" that were accumulated during his White House years.

An itemized list of everything involved is being prepared for District Court Judge Charles R. Richey by the General Services Administration, which is doing the packing, with the help of Nixon's longtime personal secretary Rose Mary Woods.

Lawyers on President Ford's staff are supervising the packing, according to White House press aide Larry Speakes, to make certain that no items are put into the boxes which might date from Nixon's years in the presidency.

A bill passed by Congress in December and signed into law by President Ford gives the government custody and control of everything—including 1,100 packing crates filled with foreign and domestic gifts—that was accumulated between the dates of Nixon's first inauguration in 1969 and his resignation in 1974.

Everything in that category has been impounded by Judge Richey under a temporary injunction until he can rule on whether Nixon or the government owns the contested materials.

Nixon's lawyers have challenged the new law as unconstitutional in one of a tangle of suits and counter-suits now before Judge Richey.

The special prosecutor's office has tentatively agreed with the White House to endorse release of the non-presidential materials "so long as it is properly supervised," a spokesman says.

In the meantime, the packing continues. Miss Woods, according to the White House, is expected to have everything packed and out of the EOB office by the end of the transition period on Feb. 9.

It is assumed that someone representing Nixon will be moving into office space reserved for the use of former Presidents in a building across Pennsylvania Avenue on Lafayette Square. Whether it will be Miss Woods is not known at the White House.

Miss Woods goes off the federal payroll in three weeks unless Nixon plans to pay her \$36,000 salary out of the \$96,000 staff and office maintenance funds allowed him annually by Uncle Sam.

One former Nixon aide who returned from California recently said that Nixon may be unable to keep Miss Woods unless he pays her out of his own pocket.

"She and her secretary, Marge Acker, come as a package deal," he explained. "Together, they make \$59,000. That's more than half the old man's budget and it doesn't leave him much for everything else. He

is going to need a half dozen \$12,000-a-year stenographers more."

His Date? His Wife

Sen. William Proxmire's date for the Washington Press Club's Congressional Dinner tonight is his wife, Ellen, from whom he has been separated since 1971.

The appearance of their names on the advance reservations list as a couple started rumors of a reconciliation. But the speculation may be premature.

Mrs. Proxmire says that their going out together is "no big deal," although it is true they seldom see each other alone. But they have remained friends, and regularly attend school functions and sports events with their son.

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