

Why Ford Omits Nixon's Name

Houston

President Ford said yesterday he has made a deliberate decision to keep Richard Nixon's name out of his campaign speeches.

Answering a press conference question here, Mr. Ford said:

"It is my judgment that is an unfortunate era, certainly the period that took place from 1971 or 1973 on, and I think the more that all of us forget that period and the unfortunate developments, the better.

"I think it is better for all of us to just not remind ourselves of that unfortunate period," he added. "I do it deliberately."

The press conference was one of the few times Mr. Ford has been asked questions about Mr. Nixon—and by implication the Watergate scandal—since the first Republican primary last February in New Hampshire.

Mr. Ford said he does not

expect Watergate, or the circumstances under which he assumed the presidency in August, 1974, to affect his quest for election.

The President first began deliberately omitting use of Mr. Nixon's name a few weeks ago, usually in response to questions about the U.S. negotiations with Panama over the future of the Panama Canal. Mr. Ford has usually responded by saying the negotiations were begun by President Johnson, "continued by his successor" and now by Mr. Ford.

In other cases Mr. Ford has referred to Mr. Nixon as "my predecessor."

In Waco yesterday the President was asked about the decision of Senator Hubert Humphrey, (Dem-Minn.), not to enter the New Jersey primary and stay out of the Democratic presidential race.

"I wouldn't pass judgment on whether it was a wise decision. I

think it was a practical one, because Jimmy Carter gained some tremendous momentum in Pennsylvania."

Mr. Ford had been predicting that Humphrey would be his November general election opponent.

Campaigning also at Conroe, north of Houston, Mr. Ford said that "I can win against" any of the other Democratic candidates. "I don't care if they elect them or nominate them in the election process or they do it in the smoke-filled rooms in New York City when they get down there for their convention. We're gonna win."

At Baylor University in Waco the President gave a sampling of what a campaign by him against Carter would be like.

"I don't really know what Jimmy Carter stands for," he told an enthusiastic student audience. "But if he gets the nomination, we'll darn sure find out."

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