

san clemente

Pat Nixon Fights Effects of Stroke

THE GOOD health that had been her private pride through her husband's public disgrace failed former First Lady Pat Nixon last weekend, as she sat quietly reading in the patio of her home overlooking the Pacific Ocean.

She had not alerted the former President or others in the San Clemente household of the pains she experienced. Instead, she went quietly upstairs to bed. Her husband noticed the next day that she was unable easily to open a can of coffee; he inquired, learned of her condition and called the family physician.

Dr. John Lungren examined Mrs. Nixon and insisted, over her protests, that she make the one-hour trip north along the coast to Long Beach Memorial Hospital, in an ambulance summoned by Secret Servicemen.

At Long Beach, across the hall from the room where Richard Nixon had suffered

Public pressure 'could have been' a factor

the loss of position and the ignominies of a bout with phlebitis nearly two years ago, Pat Nixon was told she had suffered "a stroke of maybe 35 to 50 per cent completeness," according to Dr. John Mosier, a neurologist called to aid in diagnosis. "Mrs. Nixon suffered a dysarthria," he continued, "a slight speech impediment or slurring of speech, and moderate weakness of the left arm, leg and face."

The effects of public attention to the fortunes of herself and her family "certainly could have been a contributing factor," he added, in response to a question.

As news of her affliction

spread, expressions of condolences poured in from all around the world. The two Nixon daughters, Julie Eisenhower (who rode with her in the ambulance) and Patricia Cox (who flew in from New York), stayed by. First Lady Betty Ford sent a get-well telegram, President Ford and presidential contender Ronald Reagan telephoned Nixon.

Through the week, the former First Lady's condition gradually improved, restoring partial use of her affected limbs, though she still spoke with the slight slurring. She remained in serious condition, and exercised twice daily by walking with the aid of assistants.

Her spirits, according to her husband, were excellent. He spoke of her determination in the face of adversity, that "fire in her eye that I've seen so often at difficult times in the past."

At midweek, the dark-suited Nixon brought her a white gardenia from a bush outside the bedroom of their villa. "I think she'll especially like this," he told reporters. "This is my flower this morning."

The lingering weakness and paralysis would require extensive physical therapy, doctors said, but Mrs. Nixon was described as "an excellent patient . . . a very independent individual . . . very cooperative."

There was hope, doctors added, that she might achieve "total recovery" of muscles and nerves adversely affected by the stroke. The 64-year-old patient might be released, if she avoided further complications, around the end of this week.

Meantime, there was bad news for Nixon last week. The ex-President had been ordered disbarred in New York state by a state appeals court which ruled on obstruction-of-justice charges from the New York City bar association.

The action had emerged from the miasma of the Watergate scandal, and had been imminent for many months. "We find," wrote the majority in its 4-to-1 decision, "that the evidence adduced in the case at bar warrants the imposition of the most severe sanction available to the court."