

Nixon 'Concerned' For G.O.P. in Fall

By EVERETT R. HOLLES
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SAN CLEMENTE, Calif., Aug. 18—The man who four years ago led Republicans to the greatest victory they have ever known, sat before a television set this week watching the party's convention in Kansas City with gloomy misgivings. Not once has Richard M. Nixon heard his name mentioned from the podium as speakers extol the party's record and cite what the exile of San Clemente regards as his personal and historic achievements in five and a half years in the White House.

He was said by a long-time friend to have been confident for some time that the nomination would go to President Ford, to whom he surrendered the Presidency on Aug. 9, 1974, to avoid impeachment over the Watergate scandal.

Mr. Ford's domination of the convention over the forces of Ronald Reagan was said by Mr. Nixon's friend to have been "gratifying" to the former President, but to have done little to ease his anxiety over his party's prospects in November.

No Doubt of Preference

"Publicly, of course, he has maintained a neutral stance in the party-splitting struggle between Mr. Ford and Governor Reagan," the friend said, "and he let both of them know several months ago that he would remain aloof from any preconvention favoritism."

"But those of us who have kept in touch with him were not left in any doubt about his preference for Mr. Ford."

Since Governor Reagan's selection of Senator Richard S. Schweiker as a running mate, Mr. Nixon has been much more outspoken in favoring the Ford candidacy, even though he has often criticized the President's lack of vigor in supporting such Nixon policies as détente and the easing of world tensions.

An Orange County, Calif., Republican leader, who is an officer of the influential Lincoln Club of Newport Beach, said he had been told that Mr. Nixon would dissociate himself from the forthcoming campaign, making no public appearances and issuing no statements.

"Mr. Nixon and Mr. Ford have an amicable relationship, but I wouldn't call it a warm friendship," the leader said.

Concerned Over No. 2 Spot

Mr. Nixon's friend, who frequently visits Casa Pacifica, the walled and heavily guarded Nixon estate, said that the ex-President was "deeply concerned" not only over the deep wounds the intense Ford-Reagan rivalry dealt the party but, more acutely, over the Vice-Presidential choice to be made by Mr. Ford.

"He believes," the friend continued, "that the outcome in November may depend, more than ever before, on Mr. Ford's prospective Vice-Presidential

choice. He was disheartened when friends in Kansas City informed him, on the eve of the convention, of reports that Mr. Ford had eliminated or at least relegated to a position lower on his list of possible running mates the name of former Gov. John Connally of Texas."

A former member of the Nixon White House staff confirmed Mr. Nixon's enthusiasm for Mr. Connally, his Secretary of the Treasury. He wanted to pick Mr. Connally as his Vice President in October 1973, to replace Spiro T. Agnew, until he encountered a stone wall of Congressional opposition. He then chose Gerald R. Ford, the House minority leader.

Carter Hold on South Feared

The former White House official said Mr. Nixon told him a month ago that, without a man of Mr. Connally's forceful personality, political skill and vote-getting ability to offset Jimmy Carter's strength among Southern voters, neither President Ford nor Mr. Reagan could win in November.

Mr. Nixon was reliably reported to have telephoned friends in Kansas City in a last-minute effort to keep the Connally candidacy alive. He had been told, it was said, that Mr. Ford was having second thoughts about the Texan as a running mate, lest Watergate and the 1974 milk fund scandal become major campaign issues. Whether Mr. Nixon conveyed his concern directly to Mr. Ford could not be determined.

At Casa Pacifica, Mr. Nixon's reported efforts in behalf of Mr. Connally could not be confirmed. No comment was forthcoming from him or his chief aide, Jack V. Brennan, about his reaction to any developments at Kansas City.

Mr. Nixon was believed, however, to have been in frequent touch with Herbert G. Klein, who had been his Director of Communication in the White House. Mr. Klein went to Kansas City last Friday after a meeting with Mr. Nixon. He is not a convention delegate, but he has maintained close and friendly relations with officials of the Ford Administration and has ready access to the President's campaign officials. Mr. Klein is staying at the Crown Center Hotel, the Ford headquarters.

Mr. Nixon has also reportedly been in touch directly or indirectly with President Ford's campaign manager, Rogers C. B. Morton. Mr. Morton, an admirer of Mr. Connally, was said to favor a compromise in which the Texas Democrat-turned-Republican would be-

come the Ford campaign manager in the fall—should such a move prove necessary.

Two of Mr. Nixon's political supporters say he has made known his feelings about Mr. Connally and the Carter threat in the South to other influential Republicans in Kansas City. These were said to have included President Ford's floor manager, Senator Robert P. Griffin of Michigan, and the convention's permanent chairman, Senator John L. Rhodes of Arizona.

Senator Barry Goldwater, according to one informant, has talked with Mr. Nixon several times about the strength that Mr. Connally could give the Republican ticket. The Arizona is said to have mentioned this twice during visits to Casa Pacifica.

A San Clemente neighbor said Mr. Nixon regarded as "political nonentities" several men understood to be high on Mr. Ford's list of possible running mates. The neighbor declined to identify them, but he said Mr. Nixon felt that those men lacked the political talents in getting votes and raising money that Mr. Connally has.

Mr. Nixon was said to feel that as the Vice-Presidential nominee, Mr. Connally would not only win votes away from Mr. Carter in Texas but that the Republicans would benefit from his popularity in Oklahoma, Louisiana, Mississippi, Florida and Tennessee.

Tourists Are Turned Away

Mr. Connally quit the Democratic Party in May 1973 and joined the Republicans. He was acquitted by a Washington jury on April 17, 1975 on charges of taking \$10,000 in bribes for obtaining higher price supports for Associated Milk Producers Inc.

At the adobe-walled Casa Pacifica today, guards turned away carloads of tourists at the heavy oak gates that preclude even a view of the hacienda's roof.

Earlier this week Mr. Nixon played golf with Mr. Brennan at the Shore Cliffs Country Club, then hurried home with his Secret Service escort in time for the televised convention session. It was the first Republican convention he had not attended since 1948.

Mrs. Nixon, who suffered a stroke last month, is undergoing daily therapy sessions with a nurse. She has watched the televised evening sessions of the convention with her husband in his second-floor study. Monday night and last night she retired midway through the proceedings. The Nixons had dinner on trays, before the television set with their daughter Julie and her husband, David Eisenhower.

Later this week the Nixons are expecting a visit from the Rev. Billy Graham, who is conducting a weeklong crusade at San Diego Stadium.