

# Nixon's condition improving

SAN CLEMENTE, Calif. (UPI) — Former President Richard Nixon's phlebitis condition has improved and he will soon be able to gradually increase his physical activity, his doctor said yesterday.

However, the report also indicated no change in the long period of convalescence which prevents Nixon from testifying in the Watergate trial in Washington.

Dr. Eldon B. Hickman, who attended the former President during both of his stays at Long Beach Memorial Hospital, issued a favorable statement on Nixon's condition after an afternoon visit at his seaside estate.

"I am pleased that Mr. Nixon is making satisfactory progress, although he clearly remains in a period of convalescence," Hickman said.

"Mr. Nixon has not regained his normal weight and tires easily. There are no indications of additional complications at this time."

Hickman said the former president left his

compound yesterday morning for the first time since being released from the hospital on Nov. 14, to undergo chest X-ray examinations at the nearby Marine Corps Hospital clinic at Camp Pendleton.

Hickman said the X-rays "indicate clearing of the left pleural effusion in the area of right pneumonia," a complication that developed after Nixon underwent surgery for his blood clots.

"I have advised gradual increase in limited activity, frequent monitoring of blood pressure, continued use of an elastic stocking and periodic examinations," the doctor said.

Hickman said anti-coagulation treatment with coumadin to thin Nixon's blood was being maintained at effective levels.

The physician echoed the findings of a team of doctors appointed by Watergate trial Judge John J. Sirica that Nixon was still too ill to testify at the trial, even by written deposition, until January.

"Because he (Nixon) is still in a period of convalescence, requiring controlled activity and monitoring, I see no medical indication to advise at this time any change in the estimated period of disability and avoidance of stressful activity as outlined by Dr. John C. Lungren at the time of Mr. Nixon's discharge from the hospital on Nov. 14," Hickman said.

In Washington, meanwhile, Sirica took under advisement motions asking that the Watergate hearings be delayed beyond Christmas-New Year's until Nixon can give a deposition.

# Watergate cover-up trial continues

# Nixon offered money to aides

WASHINGTON (AP) — Former President Richard M. Nixon offered to make \$200,000 or \$300,000 available to H.R. Haldeman and John D. Ehrlichman for legal and family expenses when they were leaving the White House, the Watergate cover-up jury was told yesterday.

"No strain," Nixon said. The money "doesn't come outta me."

Assistant Prosecutor Richard Ben-Veniste disclosed the offer and asked whether the money could somehow be "provided by persons who were given favored treatment over the years."

"I can recall a general conversation like that," Haldeman said.

In a transcript of the tape recorded conversation, Nixon says "I never intended to use the money at all."

He said he had told his friend Charles G. "Bebe" Rebozo to "be sure that people ... who have contributed money over the contributing years are favored ... and he's used it for the purpose of getting things out, paid for in check and all that sort of thing."

The "it" in that conversation apparently referred to the fund Nixon had mentioned.

Haldeman and Ehrlichman, both defendants in the Watergate cover-up trial, resigned as Nixon's top aides on April 30, 1973. The first conversation about money was on April 17 that year, with Nixon saying:

"I know the problems with families and all the rest. Just let me handle it."

Haldeman, still on the witness stand after four days, admitted the offer was made several times but said he and Ehrlichman didn't accept it. He said he resented the implication that was being left with the jury.

Ben-Veniste then read from a transcript of the April 17 conversation, part of it inaudible. The jury had not heard the tape of that conversation and it had not been made public previously.

"Let me ask you this," Nixon said. "Legal fees will be substantial... but there is a way we can get it to you and — two or three hundred thousand dollars... I know the problems with families and all the rest. Just let me handle it."

Ehrlichman replied, "Let's wait and see if it's necessary," but Nixon persisted:

"You will find that you have to do it in cash ... that you got a civic, you got a government duty."

Eight days later, on April 25, Nixon raised the point again.

"Let me ask you this," he said in a conversation with Haldeman and Ehrlichman. "Is there anyway you can use cash?"

Ehrlichman: "I don't think so."  
Haldeman: "I don't think so."

Nixon then said there was "as much, I think as 200 thousand dollars there's available in '74 campaign already."

The cross-examination will be finished today, and Ehrlichman's lawyers will begin to put on their defense.

Ben-Veniste said he had brought up the money offer to the two men because it "tends to show there was an agreement" that Nixon, Haldeman and Ehrlichman would all protect each other. Nixon is an unindicted co-conspirator in the case.

Questioned by U.S. District Judge John J. Sirica about the materiality of bringing up that conversation, Ben-Veniste said that under the agreement "Haldeman went up to the Senate Select (Watergate) committee and continued the cover-up."

He said it tended to show that Haldeman and Ehrlichman knew Nixon would "help them financially if they needed it."

It brought protests from both defendants' lawyers and Ben-Veniste said "I never said it was accepted...they all understood it in this context."

At that point Haldeman said that "it seems to me a highly unsavory connotation" had been raised.

He said the offer was in a conversation two days after Nixon had been told by Asst. Atty. Gen. Henry E. Petersen that the Justice Department felt it had "information embarrassing to Mr. Ehrlichman and me it came out."

"The President did discuss that with us and as a result suggested we retain legal counsel," Haldeman said.

Haldeman said the offer of help for legal fees came after he and Ehrlichman hired lawyers the same day.

The trial was in its 46th day and Haldeman was expected to leave the witness stand after three days of cross-examination.

He and Ehrlichman are charged along with John N. Mitchell, Kenneth W. Parkinson and Robert C. Mardian with a conspiracy to obstruct justice in the Watergate investigation.

Judge Sirica said he will probably rule today on whether written questions can be submitted to Nixon, who is considered by doctors too ill to testify in person until Jan. 6.

Mardian and Parkinson have told the judge they oppose releasing the jury over the Christmas holidays to delay the trial in order to get Nixon's testimony.

The suggestion for the recess was advanced by Ehrlichman's lawyers, who subpoenaed the former President.

# African summit imminent

JOHANNESBURG, South Africa (AP) — A historic summit meeting between leaders of black- and white-ruled Africa appeared yesterday to be imminent amid speculation that detente in southern Africa is near.

The South African press reported widely that the first step toward settling the impasse between the white minority and the black majority in Rhodesia may be taken in Lusaka, Zambia.

The Johannesburg Star said it was not known whether South African officials would be present at the talks to break the Rhodesian deadlock which has been the biggest barrier to cooperation between Pretoria and black Africa.

# Kidnappers free Italian victim

MILAN, Italy (UPI) — Kidnappers yesterday freed the 11-year-old daughter of a Milan jewel dealer who said he would have to work all his life to repay the money he borrowed to pay her ransom.

But on the island of Sardinia, a 19-year-old student kidnapped 109 days ago sent word his captors planned to kill him because his father did not pay enough.

Police said Nicoletta Di Nardi, kidnaped Nov. 16 as she walked to school with her sister, was cold and frightened when she was released but apparently unharmed.

They said her abductors freed her in the countryside near the village of Imbrugo, barefoot and still wearing her school gym uniform.

"The bandits were bad," the dark-haired child told a woman who gave her shelter after her release. But police said she seemed to remember little of her experience, except that she was held in an old house near a little church.

Mario Di Nardi, the girl's father, told newsmen he left a ransom payment at a pickup

place Tuesday. He would not specify the amount but said he had to borrow money to pay the kidnappers.

"To earn such a sum I will have to work a lifetime," he said.

Unconfirmed reports said the kidnappers originally demanded \$1.5 million but eventually settled for less than one-third of that amount.

In Sardinia, 19-year-old Luigi Daga wrote to a newspaper that he had been "sentenced to death" by his kidnappers because his father failed to pay all the money they demanded.

The young man, kidnaped in Oristano Aug. 17, said the kidnappers granted his "last wish" to say goodbye to his family and girl friend in his letter.

Luigi's father, landowner Benigno Daga, told newsmen in a broken voice he had already paid \$38,000 ransom in three instalments and was doing his best to find more money.

"I beseech those holding my son not to harm him and to wait a bit longer," he said. "I'll try to find more money."

There have been 39 kidnappings in Italy this year and seven people are still being held. The highest ransom reportedly paid was more than \$10 million for Giuseppe Lucchini, 22, son of a Brescia steel magnate.

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# Mining control bill set

WASHINGTON (AP) — Sponsors of a bill to regulate coal strip mining moved yesterday to bring it to a speedy House floor vote and predicted passage in both houses by sometime next week.

They said quick action is essential to give the recessing 93rd Congress enough time to vote to override in case President Ford vetoes the bill.

The legislation was readied for final action on Tuesday when a House-Senate conference committee broke a four-month deadlock and reached final agreement on a compromise

version.

However, opponents have threatened to challenge the measure in the House Rules Committee in an attempt to block a floor vote.

The House must act on the legislation before it can go to the Senate.

House sponsors said House Speaker Carl Albert promised to urge the Rules committee to give the bill the highest priority. They said the committee might act on the bill as early as today so it can be positioned for a floor vote early next week.

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