

PRESIDENT

NIXON

RESIGNS

First Resignation by a President

By MARILYN RICHARDS

History was in the making, and the Constitution in process as the 37th President of the United States, Richard Milhous Nixon announced his resignation Thursday 4 p.m. AST. His resignation, the first ever by a president, became effective Friday, August 9, noon EDT.

In a formal letter to Secretary of State Henry Kissinger, delivered 25 minutes

before Ford's inauguration Nixon simply wrote: "Dear Mr. Secretary: I hereby resign the office of the President of the United States. Sincerely, Richard Nixon."

THE SPEECH

In his speech Thursday, which was broadcast live on radio and television stations in Fairbanks, Nixon said, "Throughout the long and difficult period of Watergate, I have felt it was my duty to persevere, to make every possible effort to complete the kind of office to which you elected me."

"In the past few days, however, it has become evident to me that I no longer have a strong enough political base in the Congress to justify continuing that effort," said Nixon. Nixon apparently came to his decision after Sen. Hugh Scott and other Republican leaders in the Senate told Nixon the evening before he did not have a chance against an impeachment vote should one appear in the U.S. Senate.

"As long as there was such a base, I felt strongly that it was necessary to see the constitutional process through to its conclusion; to do otherwise would be unfaithful to the spirit of that deliberately difficult process, and a dangerously destabilizing precedent for the future."

"But with the disappearance



SMILING PRESIDENT GERALD R. FORD IS SHOWN WITH HIS WIFE. (Photos courtesy of Fairbanks Daily News-Miner)

of that base I now believe that the constitutional purpose has been served and there is no longer a need for the process to be prolonged."

"I would have preferred to carry through to the finish no

matter the personal agony that would have been involved. And my family unanimously urged me to do so," Nixon said but adds:

"But the interest of the na-

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WITH FORD BEHIND HIM, FORMER PRESIDENT NIXON DELIVERS MESSAGE TO CONGRESS.

Pres. Nixon Resigns . . .

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tion must always come before any personal consideration."

"From the discussions I have had with congressional and other leaders, I have concluded because of the Watergate matter I might not have the support of the Congress that I would consider necessary to back the very difficult decisions and carry out the duties of this office in the way the interests of the nation will require."

"I have never been a quitter. To leave this office before my office is completed is abhorrent to every instinct in my body," said Nixon. The former president did not reveal much emotion and appeared calm throughout the speech.

IMMUNITY?

Nixon also hinted for immunity or that the impeachment proceedings be dropped as a result of his resignation. "To continue to fight through the months ahead for my personal vindication would almost totally absorb the time and attention of both the President and Congress in a period when our entire focus should be on the great issues of peace abroad and prosperity without inflation at home."

"Therefore, I shall resign the presidency effective at noon tomorrow (Friday, August 9, 1974)."

"Vice President Ford will be sworn in as president at that hour in this office." Nixon and his family did not attend Ford's inauguration but had departed on the presidential jet for his San Clemente, Calif. home and thus still left the nation's capitol as the 37th president.

Nixon then called for in his speech for the nation to help and support Ford and give him "the cooperation he would need from all." Ford is retaining the entire Nixon cabinet but has not yet moved into the White House. The new president is expected to appoint a new vice president by the end of this week.

"As we look to the future," the first essential is to begin healing the wounds of this nation; to put the bitterness and the divisions of the recent past behind us and to rediscover those shared ideals that lie at the heart of our strength and unity as a great and as a free people."

"By taking this action, I hope that I will have hastened the start of that process of healing which is so desperately needed in America."

WRONG JUDGMENTS

Later in the speech, Nixon did not admit to any wrongdoing or guilt in the Watergate affair but said, "I regret deeply any injuries that may have been done in the course of the events that led to this decision. I would

say only that if some of my judgments were wrong, and some were wrong, they were made in what I believed at the time to be in the best interest of the nation."

Nixon then thanked his family, friends and supporters for standing beside him in the past difficult months.

"And to those who have not felt able to give me your support, let me say that I leave with no bitterness toward those who have been concerned with the good of the country however our judgments might differ," he added.

"I shall leave this office with regret at not completing my term, but with gratitude for the privilege of serving as your President for the past 5½ years. These years have been a momentous time in the history of our nation and the world. They have been a time of achievement in which we can all be proud, achievements that represent the shared efforts of the administration, the Congress and the people."

THE PEACEMAKER

Nixon apparently wished to be remembered as a peacemaker and then cited his achievements: "We have ended America's longest war, but in the work of securing a lasting peace in the world, the goals ahead are even more far-reaching and more difficult."

He also left a legacy for Ford, advice to follow and goals to fulfill, "We must complete a structure of peace so that it will be said of this generation of Americans, by the people of all nations, not only that we prevented one war, but that we prevented future wars."

Continuing Nixon said, "We have unlocked the doors that for a quarter of a century stood between the United States and the People's Republic of China."

"We must now insure that the one quarter of the world's people who live in the People's Republic of China will be and remain not our enemies but our friends."

Nixon also said that we have made friends with the Middle East and so that the cradle of civilization will not become its grave."

Nixon added, "Together with the Soviet Union we have made crucial breakthroughs that have begun the process of limiting nuclear arms," and that "We must continue to develop and expand that new relationship so that the two strongest nations of the world will live together in cooperation rather than confrontation."

"Around the world, in Asia, in Africa, in Latin America, in the Middle East, there are millions of people who live in terrible poverty, even starvation. We must keep as our goal turning away from production of war and expanding production for peace . . ."

"Here in America . . . We must press on, however to a goal of not only more and better jobs, but of full opportunity for every American, and of what we are striving so hard right now to achieve, prosperity without inflation."

GREAT CAUSES

"For more than a quarter of a century in public life I have shared in the turbulent history of this era. I have fought for what I believed in. I have tried to the best of my ability to discharge those responsibilities that were entrusted to me."

"Sometimes I have succeeded and sometimes I have failed . . . and 'I pledge to you tonight that as long as I have a breath of life in my body, I shall continue . . . to work for the great

causes to which I have been dedicated throughout my years as a congressman, a senator, a vice president and president; the cause of peace not just for America but among all nations, prosperity, justice and opportunity for all our people."

"When I first took the oath of office as President 5½ years ago, I made this sacred commitment: 'To consecrate my office, my energies and all my wisdom I can summon to the cause of peace among nations.' Nixon also stated he will be devoted to the cause as long as he lives."

"I have done my best in all the days since to be true to that pledge. As a result of these efforts, I am confident the world is a safer place today, not only for the people of America, but for the people of all nations, and that all of our children have a better chance than before of living in peace rather than dying in war."

"This, more than anything, is what I hoped to achieve when I sought the presidency. This, more than anything, is what I hope will be my legacy to you, to our country as I leave the presidency."

In ending Nixon said, "To have served in this office is to have felt a very personal sense of kinship with each and every American. In leaving it, I do so with this prayer: May God's grace be with you in all the days ahead."

MORE PROBLEMS

But the days ahead still look gloomy for the former president. Nixon is still vulnerable to Watergate prosecution, possible impeachment and possible disbarment from practice in California.

"Only if you've been in the deepest valley can you ever know how magnificent it is to be on the highest mountain," Nixon told a cheering crowd arriving in San Clemente after a tearful farewell from the White House.

In April the Joint Committee on Internal Taxation disclosed Nixon owed \$444,022 in back taxes plus interest and a penalty for negligence. Nixon was not allowed a deduction for the donation of his vice presidential and presidential papers. The secret sale of part of the San Clemente estate, the misuse of government funds to improve his homes and the late mortgages due on them are other problems to be faced.

Nixon, though despite his resignation and possible impeachment proceedings will receive \$156,000 a year for life. \$60,000 of the sum is his pension, and he will also receive up to \$96,000 for staff assistance. He will be provided with free office space. Mrs. Nixon is eligible to receive \$20,000 a year pension should she survive her husband. The pensions were established by Congress in 1958 and set at the salary levels of the Cabinet members. If the Cabinet salaries rise, the pension will also automatically.

The Nixons will also receive Secret Service protection as long as they desire, though their daughters' have ended last weekend. They will also have free mailing privileges for non-political mail.

Nixon may also be eligible for \$18,000 a year in Civil Service retirement benefits as a result of his government service as a federal employee, Navy officer, member of both the House and Senate and as vice president. Nixon is also entitled to Social Security benefits he might have earned while in private law practice.

In the future he may also have his memoirs published.