

News Summary and Index

SATURDAY, MARCH 2, 1974

The Major Events of the Day

Watergate

A Federal grand jury indicted seven men, all former officials of President Nixon's Administration or his 1972 reelection campaign, on charges of covering up the Watergate scandal. Never before have so many close and trusted advisers of an American President faced criminal accusations in a single indictment. The charges included obstructing justice, perjury and conspiracy—a conspiracy, the grand jury said, that continued "up to and including" today. [1:8.]

The Watergate grand jury reportedly asked Chief Judge John J. Sirica of the Federal District Court in Washington to give the House impeachment inquiry committee evidence relating to President Nixon's role in the Watergate case. The grand jury issued a sealed "report" to the judge, and investigative sources said that they understood the document contained a description of the grand jury's findings about Mr. Nixon's possible involvement in the Watergate cover-up. [1:7.]

President Nixon expressed the hope that trials arising out of the new Watergate indictments "will move quickly to a just conclusion." He also cautioned the nation to remember that the accused are presumed innocent unless found guilty. [1:5-6.]

The long line of would-be spectators that started forming two hours before the 11 A.M. hearing in which seven Nixon Administration and campaign aides were indicted was exiled to the corridor outside the small, wood-paneled courtroom in which Judge Sirica presided. The focus of attention was on a group of 21 persons—9 men and 12 women—of whom 15 were black and six were white. This was the Watergate grand jury, formed some 21 months ago. [1:5-7.]

Judge Lee P. Gagliardi in Federal District Court in New York abruptly suspended the conspiracy-perjury trial of John N. Mitchell and Maurice H. Stans, two former Cabinet members, for what he said were "apparent excesses" by the chief Government prosecutor in his opening statement. He said that he would rule Monday on demands by defense attorneys for a mistrial. [1:4.]

International

Prime Minister Heath, deprived of his majority in Parliament by Britain's voters, declined to resign. His action raised the prospect that Mr. Heath's Conservatives, out-

numbered by the Labor party in the House of Commons, would try to remain in power. Thus, Britain faced one of the gravest crises in her modern political history. [1:1-3.]

The British pound fell sharply and London stock prices toppled in chaotic trading in a dramatic reaction to the loss of ground by the Conservative Government in the national elections. The pound fell 4 cents against the United States dollar, but regained some of its losses, closing at about 1.85 cents lower at less than \$2.29. [41:8.]

Israeli prisoners held by Syria, long the focus of dispute that prevented troop-pull-back negotiations, received their first visit from Red Cross inspectors. Meanwhile, Secretary of State Kissinger arrived in Damascus for talks with President Hafez al-Assad. [1:1.]

National

The Democratic National Committee adopted, over the muffled objections of the party's state chairmen, a new set of rules governing the selection of delegates through proportional representation to the Presidential nominating convention in 1976. The main purpose of the new rules is to broaden participation in the choice of the next Democratic national ticket and, at the same time, to bury the angry debate about "quotas" for blacks, women and youth in the rules that guided the Democratic convention in Miami Beach in 1972. [13:4-5.]

Metropolitan

The city officially began a program to put on the streets thousands of cruising taxicab drivers trained in the observation and reporting of crime and who are in radio communication with the police. The new auxiliary arm of the police is the Civilian Radio Motor Patrol which, Mayor Beame said, already has 500 crime detectors. [1:2-3.]

New York State's energy chief, Maj. Gen. Almerin C. O'Hara, announced that the Federal Energy Office would allocate 451.9 million gallons of gasoline to the state in March, or about 9 million more gallons than in February. He made the announcement even though the Federal Energy Office has not disclosed its March allocations for New York and the other states. A Federal spokesman said that the March allocation was being prepared in consultation with state officials and that the figures would be announced in the coming week. [12:2-3.]