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The Nixon Morality

FAVORITISM was the charge leveled against the administration's treatment of the big grain dealers who profited so handsomely in the recent Russian wheat deal. No one seriously contended that a crime had been committed.

So it figured that President Nixon, following a dubious claim by Vice President Agnew that an FBI investigation was on, would actually order an investigation by the Bureau. For the FBI is sure to discover that no crime was involved.

In the Watergate affair, the deepest suspicion is that the attempted break-in to Democratic headquarters had something to do with former officials of the Nixon administration who have been active in the President's re-election campaign. In particular, attention centered on former Secretary of Commerce Maurice Stans, who is campaign treasurer, and former Attorney General John Mitchell.

The President was asked about all this in his news conference of Aug. 29. He made what he called a "categorical" statement that "no one in this administration, presently employed, was involved in this very bizarre incident."

At the same news conference Mr. Nixon dealt with charges that the administration might cover up the investigation. As barriers against a whitewash, he cited "a full field investigation by the FBI" and prosecution by the Justice Department.

But now it comes out that the Justice Department has not pressed those indicted for

the break-in on the source of their funds. Mr. Stans, who is a potential source, has issued statements to the press but refused to be questioned. And The Washington Post has developed a story to the effect that Robert Mardian, a former assistant attorney general and leading figure in the reelection campaign, directed the destruction of documents pertinent to the Watergate affair.

THEN THERE IS the matter of Gen. John Lavelle, the Air Force officer retired for unauthorized bombing of North Vietnam. The White House has taken the position that it was a one-man operation involving complicated orders which was suitably disposed of within the military.

In fact, it is clear that many, many officers were involved. There was an attempt by Air Force Chief of Staff Gen. John Ryan to cover the affair up with the Congress. Gen. Ryan's action was apparently inspired by civilian authorities. The indications are that those civilian authorities were not at the Pentagon, as many of us thought, but at the White House.

As a final case, there was the bitter argument last month about the bombing of North Vietnam and the dike system in the Red River valley. The serious charge, the charge made explicitly by United Nations Secretary-General Kurt Waldheim, is that the bombing endangered the dikes.

But President Nixon chose to make it seem that the issue was whether the bombing

of the dikes was deliberate. In his press conference of July 27, Mr. Nixon gave one answer which went on for 24 paragraphs without once acknowledging that we were indeed hitting the dikes or that the bombing did, as Waldheim truly asserted, endanger the dike system.

WHAT EMERGES from all this is the Nixon ethic. In every instance, the President and his men obscure moral issues. They reply forthrightly to charges not made. When it happens to them to tell the truth, the truth they tell is not the whole truth.

Exactly why this is so baffles me.

The President's sense that people are out to get him — they kick him around, as he once put it — probably plays a part. So does the will to win and the emphasis on being first. But even allowing for all these things, I really don't understand the constant disposition to hedge the truth, to be disingenuous, to con people.

What I do understand is that the public morality has been debased. There is something dirty about Washington these days, and while I don't suppose Mr. Nixon is entirely to blame, neither do I see how he can be altogether divorced from responsibility.

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Energy Cutbacks Urged by Nixon

Post 7/18/73 By Bill Neikirk
Associated Press

Cutting back energy consumption 5 per cent means a cold winter, the Nixon administration says.

It means going easier on the gas pedal, avoiding "jackrabbit starts" and 70-mile-per-hour speeds on the highways. Or keeping the house darker at night and repairing leaky faucets.

There are some of the energy-saving measures suggested by a key administration energy official, Deputy Treasury Secretary William E. Simon, chairman of President Nixon's Oil Policy Committee.

Nixon urged Americans on June 29 to reduce their personal energy usage by five per cent, but suggested only a few ways how this could be achieved.

At a reporter's request, Simon asked his staff to prepare a list of ways that the average American could save energy. The compilation centered around energy conservation in the home.

For example, raising the thermostat of home air conditioners by 4 degrees will save 15 to 20 per cent in electricity, the list says. In the winter-time, dropping the thermostat four degrees can save 10 per cent in electricity.

Or, "use fans rather than air conditioning," it says.

Better insulation also will help. The list suggests 6 inches or more insulation in ceilings and 4 inches or more in walls. It also says to caulk or weatherstrip windows and close the curtains when the air conditioning is on in the summer and furnace operating in the winter.

The list suggests turning off all appliances and lights that are not needed and buying electric appliances that use less electricity.

What was meant by appliances that use less electricity was not explained, but one of-

ficial said, for example, that frost-free refrigerators use more electricity than refrigerators without that convenience.

Other suggestions included reducing electric power use during peak demand periods of late afternoon and early evening; keeping heating and air conditioning equipment in good condition; removing dust from registers and ducts, and replacing and cleaning filters.

Or, repairing leaky faucets, especially hot-water faucets; using a humidifier on the furnace in the winter; making more efficient use of appliances, like washing clothes only when there is a full load.

Automobile drivers could reduce their speed from 70 to 50 miles per hour and save 20 to 25 per cent in gasoline, the list said.

Also, the engine should be kept tuned, the tires properly inflated, and the engine should be warmed up before driving. Another suggestion was not to let the engine idle for more than 45 seconds.

Multigrade engine oil should be used because it allows an engine to operate more efficiently, according to the list. And, naturally, the car air conditioning should be used less.

"Buy cars more economical in gasoline use," because the list said. More economical cars can save 1,000 gallons of gasoline a year or \$400.

Businessmen should reduce their trips and housewives should combine shopping trips.

In addition, as Nixon suggested in his message to Congress; the list said many Americans could avail themselves of public transportation or use car pools to commute to work.