

# Expectant Air of Historic Moment Hung Over Area

By Douglas B. Weaver

Washington Post Staff Writer

Five people gathered around the floor model television sets in the Edco Furniture Co. store at 7th and D Streets N.W. yesterday afternoon to watch as the moment was a soon opera-

"We're all waiting," said a TV salesman. "I don't think I'm going to live another 200 years to see this again, and I don't want to miss it now."

The expected resignation of Richard Nixon as President was the object of the salesman's anticipation and a strange presence yesterday in the lives of many workers, residents and visitors in Washington.

At Lafayette Park, across Pennsylvania Avenue from the White House, a steadily growing crowd of several hundred people continued a watch begun when the resignation runners surfaced on Tuesday. Many had tents for radios yesterday and a tent in the new set's middle.

The size and membership of the crowd was constantly changing, as people came, looked around for a while, then moved on. There were about 150 in the park at 6 p.m.

"I hope it's a one-in-a-lifetime thing, and I didn't want to pass it up," said Mary Beth Allen, who works for an export-import bank. During the noon hour, the First Baptist Church Youth Choir of Marikina, Fla., sang "The Battle Hymn of the Republic" on the steps of the Capitol.

"I can't believe that we're in Washington on the day this is happening," said Dennis Sheffield, Jr., a member of the choir. "We've been on tour since last Friday and didn't know what was going on until we picked up the paper" this morning. "I'm glad."

On Connecticut Avenue, people were buying, selling, eating, drinking, loitering and hurrying yesterday. The ticker tapes at brokerage houses drew their usual lunchtime audience. In the paneled rooms of Brooks Brothers, tailored through pipes of paisley ties. Chris Liebert, a 24-year-old saleswoman at Joe's



By Katherine Thomas—The Washington Post

Spectators gathered outside the White House fence yesterday, continuing a vigil that began with Tuesday's resignation runners.

Place, said, "Everybody's talking about the resignation. And everybody seems to be glad. One customer said he had bought some champagne to celebrate." Crime in the District of Columbia was occurring at about the normal pace yesterday according to Thomas Eakas, deputy chief of the

police department in charge of the patrol division. "We've had a couple of bank robberies," Estes said, "today's pattern is consistent with that of the past few weeks." For some people, yesterday still was like any other day. To a crew of Metro construction workers sitting

around traffic barricades drinking beer and eating lunch not far from the White House, the trivial day-to-day existence seemed of more concern than the affairs of state. "So I told the foreman," one burly hard-hat said to his colleague. "I told the foreman that under no circumstances was I going to do that kind of a job that way." The conversation about the overworking foreman continued uninterrupted by thoughts of Watergate for another 10 minutes. In the minds of some, Mr. Nixon's plight was secondary to interest in Mr. Nixon's favorite sport.

In the elevator at the Fairfax County office building, a voice asked if Mr. Nixon had resigned. "You're o'clock, on televi-

Most of the people who were interviewed by Washington Post reporters yesterday from Leesburg to Bowie wore in favor of the President's resignation.

"I definitely think he should," John M. Anderson, 54, said as he stood in front of the Brophyll for Congress headquarters on the main street of Leesburg. "Not only did I vote for him," said Anderson, "I contributed to his damn campaign, and that's what really grips me."

At Lyons Corner shopping center, Phyllis A. Amos said, "It's the best thing that has happened to this government in a long time." Clerks and customers were mused around the cosmetics counter at the Gramercy, and somebody said, "It is very sad for our country."

Sortieable, a century-old pocket of black homes near Bailey's Crossroads school bus driver Earl Watson said he did not want to see Mr. Nixon resign. "He should be impeached," Watson said.

Louise Grant, a teacher in a Head Start program, echoed Watson's view. "He has hurt a whole lot of people. He was totally wrong. He has to pay..."

Mr. Jones, a retired Air Force officer interviewed at Andrews Air Force Base, said he had "heard plenty of evidence and much of it seems reliable. Mr. Nixon seems to have mispronounced so many things it makes the citizens of this country lose faith in their government. Stearns, a Democratic member of the county's landwarden commission, said, "I feel sorry for him. I think he's been railroaded and I think he shouldn't resign."

In the television department of the Sears store at Montgomery Mall, salesman Mike Waters predicted that "there'll be a lot of people in here tonight." Waters said that until this week people seemed to have tired of Watergate, but "the last couple of days, every time there's a bulletin people come in off the streets..."

in the Free State Mall in Bowie, William James, a

New Hampshire resident visiting the Washington area, said, "I think he's being railroaded. I'm no lover of Nixon, but I think he's being given the choice to either resign or be impeached. All of them are guilty; Nixon just got shirred. He's getting what he deserves but there's a lot of others that deserve the same thing..."

Bill Harvey, a sales manager in a department of this city about the best thing he could do, the best thing for the country."

Harvey said he voted for Mr. Nixon in 1972, and although he has been disappointed by the President's performance, would probably vote for him again "given the same alternatives." He said he has to reserve judgment on whether he would vote for Gerald Ford in 1976.

But whether there was or was not interest in the streets yesterday, officials at the Kennedy Center reported that their people were busy as people called and tried to exchange their tickets for future performances so they could watch Mr. Nixon on television.

But the prime attraction at the center was the Russian Moscow dancers, and all performances had been sold out.

And spectators were set up all the way so those in attendance there last night could hear Mr. Nixon's address during an intermission.

On K Street, NW yesterday, a girl who said her name was "Missy" from Arizona, stopped passerbys and told them, "Jesus loves you."

"What about the President?" a man asked. "I don't know much about that," Missy said. "But Jesus loves him too."

Contributing to this story were Washington Post Staff Writers Laura Kriwan, Charles Krause, Carl Robinson, Deborah Yager, Jane Ripstein, Mary Kay Howe, Blower, James Omsog, Al Fred E. Jones, Ken Haggis, Herold J. Logan, Paul W. Daniels, Tom Taylor and Alan Ginsberg.