

Nixon Speaks Out—and Firm Purrs

By Drew Pearson
and Jack Anderson

Richard Nixon has made an unusual campaign statement which has the earmarks of promoting the cause of important clients of his New York law firm, Nixon, Mudge, Rose, Guthrie, Alexander and Mitchell.

The statement opposes a trucking bill now before Congress which would increase truck weights and sizes on interstate highways. While there has been considerable opposition to this bill, the unique aspect of Mr. Nixon's statement is that he has taken such few stands on other issues during the current campaign. His law firm, however, has been paid \$838,380 by the railroads and the railroads are vigorously opposed to increasing truck weights and sizes.

The facts regarding Nixon's stand on the trucking bill could be very important and the public is entitled to know about them.

For four years Vice President Humphrey has constantly been in the public eye and the newspapers have watched everything he has done. Likewise with George Wallace. For the past six years he was either Governor of Alabama and subject to daily press scrutiny or was assistant Governor and equally in the limelight.

Nixon, however, has been partially out of the public limelight; at least has not

been subject to intense newspaper scrutiny since he ran for Governor of California in 1962, at which time he became very violent toward the press.

Regardless of his violence, the press has an obligation to focus attention on Nixon's legal and other activities, including his law practice.

His law firm represents two railroads, the Delaware and Hudson and the Missouri-Kansas. The official records of the Interstate Commerce Commission show that during three years, 1965-67, the Nixon law firm received \$499,794 from the Delaware and Hudson and \$338,856 from Missouri-Kansas railroad. Even on Wall Street these fees are not considered chicken feed.

Ducking Other Issues

During the current campaign Nixon has refused to take a stand on such important issues as the war in Vietnam and the qualifications of Abe Fortas to be Chief Justice. Nevertheless on Sept. 16 he issued a statement from his traveling headquarters in California opposing this relatively unimportant trucking bill which had been vigorously opposed by the railroads.

"This proposal," Nixon said, "raises serious issues, including the safety and convenience of the motoring public. Questions remain about the extent to which greater truck size and weight would impose additional wear and tear on a road network.

"I believe these matters are so important to so many of our people that I favor postponement of action on the bill now before the House.

"As President I would want this entire matter most carefully reconsidered. I would direct the Secretary of Transportation to take a hard look to make certain that the interest of the traveling public and also the life of our highways are fully protected as we facilitate the vital movement of goods in the Nation's commerce."

It is considered significant that several members of Nixon's law firm are very closely associated with his campaign. Two of his partners, Leonard Garment and John N. Mitchell, are with him constantly. How much they had to do with his unusual statement could not be ascertained.

However, the public has a right to know to what extent Nixon's law firm is going to dictate policy when and if he becomes President, as it appears to be doing while he is a candidate.

Note: After Sen. John Bricker of Ohio ran for Vice President on the Republican ticket in 1944, this column revealed that his law firm was receiving a retainer of \$30,000 from the Pennsylvania Railroad and that Bricker, as chairman of the Senate Interstate Commerce Committee, was putting across legislation for the railroads. After this

was published Bricker was defeated by Sen. Steve Young, Democrat, partly because of this conflict of interest.