

# Republic

## In Crisis:

## It's Only

## A Matter

## Of Time

By Art Buchwald

Americans are groggy from keeping up with all the things happening to their government in the past year. So far the people being blamed for this are the press, overzealous aides in the Nixon administration, the Justice Department and the Senate Watergate Committee.

But Teeshold Ratameyer, a computer expert, has another theory. He thinks that the Time Machine is out of synchronization. He feels that unless someone gets it back in order we will never be able to sort out our troubles.

"As far as I know," he told me, "The Time Machine was working perfectly up until the election. Nixon received his mandate and the machine had been programmed to give us a peace with honor soon afterwards. But then someone fed Watergate into the machine and it's been acting erratically ever since."

"How do you mean?"

"Well for one thing, this is the first time in history that you've had gasoline rationing after a war was over. In fact it was only after we stopped fighting that we had shortages of any kind."

"It does sound haywire," I admitted.

"Now look at Watergate. The Time Machine was programmed for a scandal in Nixon's administration. . . . Every administration must have at least one. But Watergate produced a dozen, plus two Constitutional crises in one year."

"Two?"

"That's correct. You have the question of the President being forced to give up his tapes, and you have the question of whether a Vice President can be indicted for a crime before he's impeached. In the past, the Time Machine has only given us one constitutional crisis every 20 years."

"Maybe someone has speeded up the machine," I suggested.

"That's a possibility," Ratameyer said. "It might explain the rate of inflation. We know that we must expect a certain amount of inflation every year, but what's been happening in the last six months is ridiculous. Only a Time Machine that's gone completely berserk could allow prices to increase at the rate they have."

"Do you think the Democrats have been messing with the Time Machine to make Nixon look bad?"

"I doubt it," said Ratameyer. "They're just as much victims of it as the Republicans. Here they have the greatest political scandal in the history of the nation and they don't even know what to do with it. Anyone who could fix a Time Machine would be bright enough to have a plan."

"I must admit your theory has some validity,"

"The Time Machine is not only out of whack politically, but it's also out of whack socially. More people are getting divorced than are getting married this year."

"That in itself is a Constitutional crisis," I said.

"We've gone to the moon, but we can't heat our homes. And the higher the standard of living gets in this country, the more chance you have of choking to death."

"What can we do?"

"Someone has got to get to the Time Machine and repair it. We've got to put it back in working order before it gets to all of us."

"But who could do it?" I asked.

"It's really a job for Superman."

"Why not?"

"I called him," said Ratameyer, "but he told me he doesn't make house calls."