

AFL-CIO Asks Resignation of Nixon

UNIONS, From A1

"Mr. Nixon has broken faith with the Constitution, the Congress and the people. . . . We cannot ask the political questions now. It is too late. . . . It is time to ask the hard legal and moral questions. It is time to put these matters to trial before the Congress."

Sen. Daniel K. Inouye (D-Hawaii), a member of the Senate Watergate committee and a speaker at the AFL-CIO's convention, called upon Mr. Nixon "to place our national interest and our national welfare above all other concerns and to resign."

"Like many of you," he told the delegates, "I have sadly concluded that President Nixon can no longer effectively lead our nation."

He added later that Congress "should seriously consider impeachment" if the President does not resign, but said he does not think there are enough votes in Congress to impeach the President at this point.

Impeachment — akin to indictment — requires a majority vote in the House. Conviction — removal from office — requires a two-thirds vote in the Senate.



AFL-CIO President Meany congratulates Nixon's resignation in a speech at the labor federation's convention in Miami.

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Not long after Inouye spoke, Labor Secretary Peter J. Brennan issued a statement saying "the President deserves our continued support in carrying out his duties and our prayers that he will make the right decisions concerning not only the Watergate affair and the Middle East situation but the problems of inflation here at home."

"I do not think we should be pushed into a state of panic by those who have been seeking the President's scalp for some time now," Brennan said. He did not say whom he had in mind.

An aide to Meany said that copies of the AFL-CIO's resolution will be delivered to every member of Congress today, to be followed by the federation's veteran corps of lobbyists. "We don't adopt these things just to hear the sound of our own voice," he said. "Our people will be up there."

"The first thing will be Ford," he said, meaning the effort to persuade Congress to sidetrack the Michigan congressman's nomination as Vice President, which requires the approval of two-thirds of both the House and Senate.

The Executive Council, made up of Meany, AFL-CIO secretary-treasurer Lane Kirkland and the presidents of 33 of the federation's 113 member unions, approved the resolution yesterday morning. Thirty-one council members were present, and only one, Paul Hall of the Seafarers, voted not to take the action.

Included among those who voted yes were the presidents of four construction unions and one maritime union who endorsed Mr. Nixon in last year's election.

They are John H. Lyons

of the Ironworkers, Martin J. Ward of the Plumbers, Hunter P. Wharton of the Operating Engineers, Peter Fosco of the Laborers and Thomas W. Gleason of the International Longshoremen's Association.

The AFL-CIO, at Meany's behest, stayed neutral in the 1972 presidential election, the first time since its creation in 1955 that it did not support the Democratic presidential nominee.

Some individual AFL-CIO unions supported the Democratic nominee, Sen. George McGovern (D-S.D.). Others supporter Mr. Nixon. The construction and the maritime unions, generally thought of as the most conservative in the AFL-CIO, were the heart of Mr. Nixon's strength.

After the election Mr. Nixon chose Brennan, who was president of the New York City and New York state building and construction trades councils, as his Secretary of Labor.

The AFL-CIO was adamant in its opposition to Mr. Nixon before the Democrats nominated McGovern in July of last year. After last November's election, there was a seeming thaw in the relationship between the two sides. More recently, however, the federation has stepped up its attacks on Mr. Nixon. Yesterday's resolution shattered all lingering thought of accommodation.

"We believe the American people have had enough," the resolution said. "More than enough."

"Mr. Nixon's determination to prevent judicial examination of his tapes no matter what the cost . . . can only further erode public confidence," the AFL-CIO said. "When the President appears fearful of facing a Supreme Court composed in large measure of his own appointees the public can scarcely resist the darkest speculation.

"We therefore call upon Richard Nixon, president of the United States, to resign . . . in the interest of preserving our democratic system of government, which requires a relationship of trust and candor between the people and their political leaders," and "in the interest of restoring a fully functioning government, which his administration is too deeply in disarray to provide."

The federation and Woodcock both acknowledged there are risks in impeachment in what the federation called "these times of great danger on the international front." But "the cause of peace and freedom cannot be served by a discredited presidency at home," the federation maintained.

There was no comment yesterday from the Teamsters union, the largest in the country, which—like the Auto Workers and Mine Workers—is not part of the AFL-CIO. The Teamsters were the most important of the unions to support Mr. Nixon in last year's election.