

Post 9-19-74

'There's a Time for a Pardon . . .'

By Dorothy McCardle

Reprinted from yesterday's late editions

Sen. Sam J. Ervin Jr. (D-N.C.) was quoting Scripture Tuesday night to underscore his thoughts, just as he was wont to do last summer when he presided over the Senate Watergate hearings.

This time his subject was the unconditional pardon for former President Nixon, of which Ervin does not approve—at this point in time.

"Ecclesiastes says, 'There is a time for everything under heaven,' " he began, and added, "but there is time for a pardon after a trial and conviction and not before."

Ervin and his wife were tardy, as were Sen. and Mrs. George Aiken (R-Vt.). The two senators, both of whom will leave the Senate at the end of this term, had been delayed on Capitol Hill by a vote and were half an hour late for the 6:30 farewell for them and their wives, given by Mr. and Mrs. Dale Miller at the Washington Club.

Secretary of State Henry

Kissinger was even later. His office had been calling all afternoon to say he might not get there at all. But he arrived at 10 minutes before 8 and stayed until the dot of 8.

He would not comment on pardons, saying it was "not appropriate." His wife, Nancy, was at home in the Nebraska Avenue house of the Wiley Buchanans, "not feeling very well." The Kissingers have been renting the Buchanan home this summer.

"My wife has left me," Kissinger quipped, "but we are still married." He added that they are in the midst of moving to a house in Georgetown.

Kissinger never left the front hall at the top of the stairs. He had a receiving line of his own, in which former Attorney General Elliot Richardson was the first to talk to him.

Richardson is writing a book about the role of the citizen in government, and hopes to finish it about March 1.

He also had his own ideas

about a pardon, which he had hoped to give the White House before President Ford's announcement.

"I had some ideas on the whole question," said Richardson. "I was going to try them out on a breakfast group, but they did not meet for two days after President Ford made his announcement."

Then he said that if the pardon announcement had been delayed, it could have been more effective against "a background of clear knowledge of what the possible charges might have been."

Neither Special Prosecutor Leon Jaworski nor U.S. District Judge John J. Sirica would comment on any phase of Watergate. Both are looking forward to the start of the trial of Watergate defendants on Oct. 1.

"I fully expect the trial to start then," said Sirica.

A familiar face from the days of the Nixon White House, Rose Mary Woods, attended with her frequent escort, public relations executive Robert Gray. The

personal secretary to former President Nixon hugged the 82-year-old Aiken in the receiving line and was hugged back. She merely shook hands with the Ervins. As she left, Miss Woods paused for several minutes' conversation with Mrs. Aiken, her hand on Mrs. Aiken's elbow.

Several senators had phoned their regrets because of a stag dinner President Ford was having at the White House for the Senate leadership. But Sen. John J. Sparkman (D-Ala.) came and stayed a half hour before going on to the dinner.

Sparkman will replace Sen. J. William Fulbright (D-Ark.) as chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. Fulbright phoned his regrets because of the White House dinner.

"I told Bill Fulbright today that I hope he accepts the post as the next ambassador to Great Britain," Sparkman said, "but he didn't answer, so I don't know what he will do. He would do a great job over there."