

SF-EXAMINER

4 NOV 70

Another Scar

THOUGH THE ELECTION is over, the incident of violence at President Nixon's political appearance in San Jose on Oct. 29 continues to be — and should continue to be — a matter of public concern and discussion.

Some are now saying in print that the extent of the violence — the throwing of objects at the President and the presidential cavalcade — was exaggerated. Some are also saying that the event was overplayed by the news media. The words "hoax" and "provocation" crept into one newspaper story appearing five days after the event.

These things need to be said:

- Objects were thrown at Mr. Nixon and his entourage. These objects included rocks and eggs. Even San Jose Police Chief Raymond Blackmore, who seeks to play down the incident, acknowledges this. The only debate is whether these objects were numerous, as the first news stories said, or few, as is now claimed.

- The throwing of any object hard or soft at the President of the United States at any time any place is intolerable. It is a physical assault on the Republic's highest office. It is an attack on the safety of the Republic. In the symbolic sense every American is physically attacked when an object is thrown at his President.

- That is why such an incident, when incredibly it occurs, is page one news everywhere. If only a single rock were thrown it still would be page one news of a particularly foreboding kind. Time has not healed the deep scar inflicted on this nation at Dallas in 1963, or the scars suffered at Memphis and Los Angeles.

All citizens should give thought to the long term consequences if such incidents were to be treated lightly or allowed to become commonplace. This particular incident should be reexamined in minutest detail by the Secret Service and police agencies — and reviewed by Mr. Nixon too — for lessons to be applied in the future.

As the election outcome has shown, Mr. Nixon should not have tried to use the incident for partisan advantage.