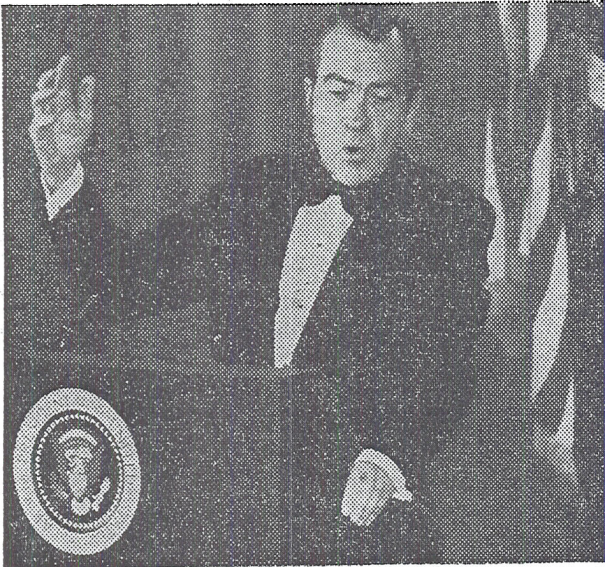




The New York Times/Michael Evans

Governor Rockefeller speaking here last month at a Republican dinner. After the Governor finished, and before President Nixon started to speak, below, aides fastened Presidential seal to the lectern for Mr. Nixon's address.



Presidential Seal to Get Workout on Nixon Trips

By NAN ROBERTSON

Special to The New York Times

WASHINGTON, Dec. 1—The White House is already worrying about an eight-ounce object made of plaster of paris that may never be seen on Chinese soil but will fly there ahead of President Nixon when he visits China in February.

Meantime, it will get a dizzying workout during the months to come as Mr. Nixon goes to meetings with President Georges Pompidou of France in the Azores; Prime Minister Edward Heath of Britain in Bermuda; Chancellor Willy Brandt of West Germany at Key Biscayne, Fla.; Prime Minister Pierre Elliott Trudeau of Canada in Washington and Premier Eisaku Sato of Japan at San Clemente, Calif.

The object is the Presidential seal, symbol of authority and office, and it goes everywhere with the President, "just like his socks and underwear," said one White House watcher.

Leapfrogs His Jet

The 10-inch-wide seal leapfrogs the Presidential jet in a giant C-141 cargo plane half the length of a football field. The same plane carries the President's 150-pound speech podium to which the seal will be fixed on arrival, his dark blue flag with its almost identical coat of arms, the Presidential automobile and the Secret Service back-up car that follows him in motorcades.

This portable equipment surrounds the President wherever he travels in this country and is always flown abroad. But it is often not displayed, especially if the host country wants to supply its own power symbols.

Actually, there are six identical plaster of paris seals kept at the White House by Signal Corpsmen. The reason is that the President, particularly in a campaign year, makes several or more speeches a day in widely separated spots to which the seals can be hauled direct from Washington.

Lyndon B. Johnson's schedule was so hectic and so often not announced until the last minute that the seal detail frequently switched briefly from plaster to lighter, unbreakable papier-mâché. But even then, the seal frequently failed to catch up with him.

President Nixon, by contrast, "gives us a pretty good shake," says Maj. Anthony Koppie, the man who keeps the seals. "He hasn't gotten ahead of us yet."

Some people have tried to snatch the seal on the road—"it would make a nice souvenir," Major Koppie acknowledged—but failed.

The design may be reproduced only if the President orders it. But so many unauthorized likenesses have been made, printed and otherwise reproduced that Congress passed a law this year forbidding any such use. It goes into effect next Jan. 5, carrying a fine of up to \$250 or a six-month jail sentence or both for each offense.

In the Nixon Administration the seal can be seen as shoulder patches on White House police uniforms, blazer pockets of White House chauffeurs and the Presidential plane's crew, and tie clasps and cuff links for the President's personal use or for his staff.

Various Presidents have also had it embedded in the White House in five places. Theodore Roosevelt put it into the floor of the great

Design Was Changed

entrance hall, from which it was later moved to a spot over the door of the diplomatic reception room. Franklin D. Roosevelt had it set into the ceiling of the President's oval office and in the cornerstone of the East Wing. And Harry S. Truman had it embossed over the door of the Blue Room and of the Presidential bedroom during the large-scale White House renovation completed in 1952.

The eagle on two of these seals—in the 1903 version installed by Theodore Roosevelt and in the 1942 cornerstone — faces the wrong way: toward the arrows of war clutched in its left talon rather than toward the olive branch of peace in its right.

So did a third eagle in the Presidential office ceiling until some time in President Johnson's Administration, when it was turned around.

Wrong - way seals were used by every President from Rutherford B. Hayes to Mr. Truman. President Hayes was the first known to have used a Presidential seal, having ordered it engraved on White House invitations in 1880.

White House experts suspect the left - facing eagle was picked either by mistake (according to heraldic custom, the eagle always faces its own right, the direction of honor), or to make it look different from the similar but not identical Great Seal of the United States.

Franklin D. Roosevelt ordered the design changed to conform with the rules and have the eagle face toward the symbol of peace on his flag, stationery and personal documents. The order was carried out by President Truman in October, 1945, after Mr. Roosevelt's death.

The practice of carting a three - dimensional, painted seal around wherever the President goes dates back at least to Mr. Truman: photographs of his 1948 whistle-stop campaign in White House files show the seal on his train's back platform.

Curiously, there is no Presidential seal that stamps official Presidential documents. This is done with the Great Seal of the United States, which is in the State Department's custody. The design of this seal was established by law on June 20, 1782.

The Great Seal is locked behind glass in the department's exhibition hall. Periodically, Bernice C. Renn, keeper of the seal and chief of Presidential commissions, operates the precision press to stamp from 3,000 to 5,000 documents a year.

She affixes the seal to commissions signed by the President installing Cabinet officers, ambassadors, officials of all independent government agencies and Presidential appointees to the Executive Office.

Through individual warrants also signed by the President, the Great Seal is put on other documents such as Presidential national proclamations and instruments of ratifications of treaties.

The front and reverse designs of the Great Seal appear on the backs of all one-dollar bills. Only the eagle front is used to stamp Presidential documents; the die for the reverse, with its pyramid and all-seeing eye, has never been cut, Mrs. Renn says.