

Mrs. Nixon Tours With Soviet Wives

By **ROBERT B. SEMPLE Jr.**
Special to The New York Times

MOSCOW, May 23—Mrs. Richard M. Nixon joined the wives of three of the Soviet Union's highest officials today for an unusual visit to a secondary school and a tour of Moscow's subway system.

This morning Mrs. Nixon paid a call on Secondary School 42 in the company of

Mrs. Leonid I. Brezhnev, wife of the chief of the Communist party; Mrs. Andrei A. Gromyko, wife of the Foreign Minister, and Mrs. Anatoly F. Dobrynin, wife of the Soviet Ambassador to the United States.

This afternoon Mrs. Brezhnev retired to the Kremlin, but Mrs. Gromyko and Mrs. Dobrynin mustered the en-

ergy and fortitude to join Mrs. Nixon for what turned out to be a brief ride on this city's famous subway system, observed by thousands of puzzled citizens and accompanied by at least 50 tenacious newsmen.

The unusual aspect of today's events, especially as viewed by the Russians, was not that Mrs. Nixon had

visited places of interest in the city, something she does everywhere she goes, but that she had managed to bring along three wives of powerful Soviet officials who tend to avoid publicity.

"I haven't seen some of these women in settings like this since I came to Moscow

Continued on Page 14, Column 3

Mrs. Nixon Visits Moscow School and Rides Subway

Continued From Page 1, Col. 6

six months ago," one Soviet journalist remarked.

Mrs. Nixon occupied the spotlight during the day in part because she was officially the guest on the tour and in part because, for most ordinary Russian citizens, she was an unknown quantity.

She was dressed in a knee-length dress of white and bright yellow, while the Russian women attired themselves in muted grays and browns.

This was not to be, of course the First Lady's only public appearance during the Moscow summit meeting.

By the end of the week, in addition to various teas and official dinners, Mrs. Nixon will have seen not only the school and the subway but Moscow State University, a department store, the circus, a children's ballet class, a fashion show, the Moscow watch factory, a jewelry exhibition and parts of Lenin-grad and Kiev.

Today's schedule was typical, although the physical demands on Mrs. Nixon seemed heavier and her opportunities to chat with plain folk fewer

than she likes. Part of the trouble was the media, representatives of which emerged in droves, and part was the security conscious Soviet police.

The result, particularly on the subway tour, was that Mrs. Nixon was effectively cordoned off by a mass of people who were either trying to write down what she was saying or worrying about her safety.

Pupils Are Wide-Eyed

Mrs. Nixon attended a first-grade reading class at Moscow's secondary school 42 in the Cheremushki District, a new residential neighborhood.

There were some 20 children in the room—the boys in gray suits, the girls in brown jumpers. There were also 5 photographers, 12 reporters, 2 television crews—one, from the White House, shooting film clips for use in next fall's campaign—and enough wattage from the strobe lights to illuminate Yankee Stadium.

"Don't be afraid," the teacher said to her wide-eyed pupils as she walked up and down between the rows of

desks. "It's nothing terrible. It's nothing terrible."

Given her varied schedule, a first lady needs a limitless supply of bright small talk, but sometimes when first ladies reach for the right comment it isn't there. "I'm the tallest one in the class," Mrs. Nixon called to the students when she came in. The students, who had yet to begin their English studies, reacted to this with bafflement.

Yet Mrs. Nixon invariably recovers from such situations. And around children she has a warmth that is infectious.

She picked up a drawing that had been done by one child and said "Oh, this is great." And she hugged and kissed a little girl who was asked to recite a poem. The children, shy at first, began to respond.

She Samples Cookies

Mrs. Nixon next breezed in and out of a physics class, a home-economics class, a music recital and basketball practice.

The home-economics class, she and Mrs. Brezhnev—who accompanied her every step of the way—squeezed under a dense electronic canopy of boom microphones, tape recorders and cameras, and then tasted cookies prepared by the children.

And during an intrasquad scrimmage staged by members of Moscow's championship secondary-school basketball team—the plyers were

so nervous they missed their first 14 shots—she and Mrs. Brezhnev did what many women who are married to rabid sports fans do at games—they talked. Mr. Brezhnev is a soccer fan, and Mr. Nixon's interest in many sports is well-known.

On the afternoon subway tour there were still more newsmen. Quadruple the number of security personnel showed up at each of the four stops Mrs. Nixon made on the subway line.

And while the First Lady was able to glimpse some of the elaborate artwork that has made the Moscow subway stations well-known, the local citizens did not see much of her. Those who did see her seemed surprised.

"This is really madness," said an American as he watched the entire entourage rumble in and out of the subway cars, with Mrs. Nixon somewhere in the middle.

"Maybe so," said a Soviet Intourist guide, "but I think it will do some good, and it will be shown in Pravda and on Russian television." He turned out to be right.