

News Summary and Index

TUESDAY, MARCH 19, 1974

The Major Events of the Day

International

The Arab oil countries, except Libya and Syria, ended their oil embargo against the United States and moved to restore production to meet the needs of American consumers. Saudi Arabia pledged an immediate production increase of a million barrels a day for the United States market, which would restore half the current deficit in American imports of Arabian oil. [1:1.]

The announcement that most Arab countries were lifting their embargo against the United States was greeted in Washington with restraint, partly because it had been expected and partly because the official statement said nothing about increases in the production of crude oil. Government and major oil officials continued to be optimistic that Saudi Arabia, the largest producer, would restore her output to what it was before the start of the Middle East war. Still, there was a feeling of unease. [1:2-3.]

National

Chief Judge John J. Sirtica of Federal District Court in Washington ordered that a grand jury report and accompanying material bearing on President Nixon's conduct in the Watergate scandal be turned over to the House Impeachment Inquiry, but appeals are expected to delay the order. In a 22-page opinion, Judge Sirtica made it clear that the secret report, as well as a sealed briefcase of evidence, deals with President Nixon's acts "in his public capacity" during the period under investigation. [1:8.]

Members of the House Judiciary Committee expressed confidence that their impeachment inquiry would be accelerated by Judge Sirtica's decision to give the committee the sealed grand jury report. They said that the court decision would increase, rather than diminish, their determination to obtain relevant tape recordings and documents being withheld by the White House. [1:7.]

It was another of those remarkable and historic days in the Watergate case and once again Judge Sirtica — despite having reached the age of retirement—was right in the middle of it all. His decision to give the grand jury's report to the House impeachment inquiry was announced on his last day in Washington. He will be succeeded by Judge George L. Hart Jr. [1:5-6.]

The Other News

International

The prosecution put Rose Mary Woods, President Nixon's personal secretary, on the witness stand in the Mitchell-Stans trial in Federal District Court in New York and she promptly told the jury that each defendant was "a fine man." Her testimony was also a mixed blessing in other ways, as far as the prosecution was concerned. She became involved in contradictory evidence produced by the defense and the prosecution. [1:5-7.]

The Civil Aeronautics Board ordered a sweeping revision of air fares that will make first-class passengers pay more, and end a system in which long-distance economy-class passengers subsidized travelers on shorter trips. The board canceled virtually all current domestic air fares, effective July 16, and ordered the airlines to submit new fares based on the agency's formula. [1:4.]

The Government moved to make air bags, or some similar kind of "passive" restraint system, mandatory on all automobiles sold in this country beginning with 1977 models. The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration announced that the controversial safety requirement would become effective on Sept. 1, 1976. [1:2-3.]

Metropolitan

President Nixon's chief domestic adviser said that New York City would receive "a lot more money" for mass transit than is now provided under White House-sponsored transportation legislation. Kenneth R. Cole Jr., director of the Domestic Council, also predicted that the new mass-transit legislation would be enacted by July 1. [1:3.]

Bowing to objections of New York City school officials, the United States Department of Health, Education and Welfare has canceled the national distribution of questionnaires that asked elementary school pupils how they and their parents and teachers reacted to children of other races. The Federal agency had told a number of city schools that they would receive special Federal grants only if they administered the racial-attitude questionnaire. [1:4.]

Sources close to the 16-month investigation by the police and District Attorney Eugene Gold of Brooklyn say it has produced evidence that most of the private refuse-collection industry in the borough is dominated by organized crime and operated essentially as a monopoly. [1:1.]

Quotation of the Day

"Although it has not been emphasized in this opinion, it should not be forgotten that we deal in a matter of the most critical moment to the nation, an impeachment investigation involving the President of the United States. It would be difficult to conceive of a more compelling need than that of this country for an unswervingly fair inquiry based on all the pertinent information."—Judge John J. Sirtica. [1:7.]

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