

The Harris Survey

73 Per Cent Rate Nixon Fair to Poor on Economy

By Louis Harris

Somewhat obscured in the roiling controversy over Watergate is the fact that President Nixon continues to be in trouble with the public over his handling of the economy—on which he receives a 73 to 21 per cent negative rating.

Just before his Phase IV program was announced, Mr. Nixon's rating on "keeping the economy healthy" was an even lower 75 to 20 per cent negative, the lowest recorded since he entered the White House.

Here is the trend of public answers to the question asked of a nationwide cross section of 1,497 households in mid-July:

"How would you rate President Nixon on keeping the economy healthy—excellent, pretty good, only fair, or poor?"

	Good-Excellent %	Only Fair-Poor %	Not Sure %
July, 1973	21	73	6
June	20	75	5
May	26	69	5

April	25	71	4
March	26	69	5
Feb.	38	58	4
Jan.	34	61	5
Dec., 1972	38	58	4
Oct.	48	57	5
Sept.	39	57	4
Aug.	32	64	4
April	25	70	5
Mar.	31	64	5
Jan.	38	56	6
Nov., 1971	34	60	6
July	22	73	5

The negative bite of the President's economic program, as might be expected, has been felt most strongly by lower income people. A growing pessimism about the state of the economy is illustrated by answers to the question:

"Do you feel the country is in a recession or not?"

	Is %	Is Not %	Not Sure %
Nationwide	44	40	16
By Income			
Under \$5,000	49	28	23
\$5,000-\$9,999	42	41	17
\$10,000-\$14,999	43	47	10
\$15,000 and over	42	47	11
By Education			
8th grade or less	49	28	23
High school	47	37	16
College	37	51	12
By Occupation			
Professional, executive	41	50	9
White collar	47	38	15
Skilled labor	46	36	18
Unskilled labor	47	37	16

It is apparent that Mr. Nixon is in trouble on the economy with the less afflu-

ent sectors of the American public.

By the same token, Watergate cuts in an exactly opposite pattern on the question:

"How would you rate the job being done by the U.S. Senate Committee on Watergate—excellent, pretty good, only fair, or poor?"

	Good-Excellent %	Only Fair-Poor %	Not Sure %
Nationwide	62	29	9
By Income			
Under \$5,000	55	29	16
\$5,000-\$9,999	62	29	9
\$10,000-\$14,999	67	27	6
\$15,000 and over	67	28	5
By Education			
8th grade or less	55	26	10
High school	61	30	9
College	68	28	4
By Occupation			
Professional, executive	69	25	6
White collar	61	32	7
Skilled labor	63	27	10
Unskilled labor	59	31	10

On the performance of the Watergate Committee — and other questions on the issue bear out precisely the same pattern—the more affluent sectors of society have been most critical of President Nixon, while the less affluent groups are less critical.