

'Campaign' Speech Is Cheered

Houston

With the third friendly audience in less than a week cheering him on, President Nixon carried his anti-impeachment campaign to the people again last night with new attacks on a foot-dragging Congress and a critical press.

"It . . . takes courage to stand and fight for what you believe is right," he said to an applauding crowd, "and that's what I'm going to do."

He called again for a speedy resolution of the impeachment question "because, believe me, dragging out Watergate drags down America."

Although he seemed somewhat less assured than last Friday in Chicago and more tense than in the relaxed setting of the Grand Ole Opry in Nashville Saturday, the President seemed to make a hit with his audience, which he hopes will influence the legislators sitting in judgment of him.

Appearing almost in a campaign role, and repeating arguments and phrases he has tried on other occasions, Mr. Nixon broke little new ground except in his opening announcement on energy.

With Congress appearing to be increasingly hostile toward him, he nevertheless launched an attack on it for "dragging its feet" on energy measures he has recommended.

In several jibes at the press, he declared that he was not obsessed by press reports, was not going to be diverted from his objectives by press criticism and

Back Page Col. 1

From Page 1

thought a president should "treat the press just as fairly as the press treats him."

The President asserted, when asked if he believed the country might be better off if the Watergate burglary had never been detected that the break-in was "wrong," "stupid" and "should never have happened."

"It should never have been covered up," he said. "I've done everything I can to see that it is uncovered." He said he had probably gone further than is wise in waiving executive privilege so that the special prosecutor, the grand jury and now the House Judiciary Committee can have access to all the facts.

He made no new concessions, however, to the judiciary committee, which has accused him of trying to define the limits of its impeachment inquiry and of withholding essential information it requires to do its job.

The hour-long appearance here before the convention of the National Association of Broadcasters was different from his appearance Friday before the Executives' Club in Chicago in that the questions were tougher and pointed more to issues in the news. A panel made up of radio-TV news directors and invited members of the White House press corps resulted in more adversary questions.

When CBS correspondent Dan Rather won applause as he approached the microphone to ask a question, the President asked Rather if he was running for something.

"No, sir, Mr. President," Rather replied. "Are you?"

When Rather asked a multi-faceted Watergate question, The President responded by asking "Which one do you want me to answer first?" Rather was not diverted and pursued his questions, which Mr. Nixon then answered indirectly.

NBC correspondent Tom Brokaw followed with another tough question that in effect accused the President

of providing inaccurate and misleading information in discussing the issue of confidentiality of presidential papers.

Without directly responding to Brokaw's challenge, the President repeated his argument that the principle of confidentiality of presidential papers must be preserved to protect future presidents.

Without it, he said, there would be instability in the office, adding that he would not give in to any demand that would weaken the Presidency or result in "destruction of the Presidency."

Mr. Nixon said he would never give Congress a "hunting license or fishing license" to search through presidential papers, but he maintained again that he had and would cooperate with the judiciary committee.

Nevertheless, he insisted that the committee already has "enough information to conduct its investigation and to see whether any charges against the President are true or false."

The President acknowl-

edged that the economy in the last few months has been in a difficult period. That difficult period will continue for a few months. Due mainly to the energy crisis, he said.

Nevertheless, he maintained that in the latter part of the year unemployment will go down and the pressure on higher prices will abate.

Increased production of energy and of food is the chief need in fighting inflation and getting the economy on a sounder footing, he said.

"Farmers have never had it so good," Mr. Nixon said when asked what assurance farmers have that higher production will not eventually lead to a break in prices.

Discussing why a president should not resign under fire or change policies because his popularity is down, Mr. Nixon recalled once more the bombing of North Vietnam in December 1972.

Despite the fact that some members of Congress believe he should be impeached for carrying out that bombing, he reiterated his belief that it was a wise and necessary act in ending the Vietnam war.

Some of his own advisers urged him to stop the bombing when criticism mounted, he said. "I considered their advice," he said. "I did not take it."

The President said he wanted future presidents to be able to make such "strong, right decisions."

Mr. Nixon also disavowed any intention to cut American troop levels in Europe in order to force greater European cooperation on politics and economics inside the Atlantic Alliance.

His remarks amounted to a major clarification and softening of his stern warning last Friday that "the Europeans cannot have it both ways" with American defense support plus "confrontation" or "even hostility on the economic and political fronts."

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