

Many Congressmen Find Impeachment

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WASHINGTON, July 4—Out in the heartland of America, in such places as Sleepy Eye, Minn., Creston, Iowa, and Fairborn, Ohio, a good many towns were treated today to speeches by members of Congress who had returned home to political picnic, parade and talk about anything but impeachment.

For most liberals and many moderates of both parties in Congress, the impeachment issue was easy to handle—flail away against the President because it is politically safe.

But those Representatives who rate at the top of the voting charts of such conservative groups as the National Association of Businessmen, Americans for Constitutional Action and the American Security Council faced a much more complicated problem: What was the position of their constituency, or, more important, should they speak out for or against impeachment?

In an election year the an-

swer was to evade the subject, which most were doing.

In Fairborn, Representative Clarence J. Brown, a Republican who scored 100 per cent on the latest N.A.B. voting chart, talked about the world food problem.

In Sleepy Eye, Representative Angher Nelson, a Republican who recorded zero on the latest vote rating of Americans for Democratic Action, a liberal group, addressed constituents using an old Fourth of July subject for his theme: faith in America.

In Creston, Representative William J. Scherle, a Republican whose A.D.A. vote rating matches Mr. Nelson's, spoke of recent rains there and the impact on the crops.

Lesson From Fishing

According to Representative William G. Bray, Republican of Indiana, a 71-year-old legislator who by conservative count has an almost perfect voting record, the reason for the topics was obvious:

"If a fish kept his mouth

shut he wouldn't get caught."

Warning to the subject of what and what not to say, Mr. Bray added: "In my district the mail an dphone calls remind me that we've got a lot of things to be done in this country rather than bring up Watergate. Out in the district they feel that legislation should be passed dealing with inflation, and I tell them that the majority party initiates the legislation."

Discussing his attitude on impeachment, Representative Bill Nichols, Democrat of Alabama, said:

"Vice President Agnew's people invited me to breakfast to ask my support of the morning of the day he resigned. If I had come out in his favor that morning I would have had egg all over my face. This is a vote a man is going to have to live with a long time—I'm just not going to commit myself until the time comes."

Mr. Nichols and other conservative Congressmen say their own polls, usually taken by sending their office newsletter

a Subject to Avoid in Holiday Speeches

to voters with a ballot slip, show their constituents do not want President Nixon either to be impeached or to resign.

"They don't want to go through the agony and spread the dirty linen out for all the world to see," Mr. Nichols said. "They want the issue to pass."

To Representative John H. Rousselot, the Republican from California who is a John Birch Society member, the issue is the "pace" of the House Judiciary Committee inquiry into the possible impeachment of President Nixon.

"Out in the district they're saying 'Why does it take so long?'" he said. But he added, "even those who are disenchanted with Nixon say 'I don't know that it should go to impeachment.'"

Mr. Rousselot said his own poll showed that only 36 per cent of the 8,000 constituents responding favored impeachment.

A similar poll taken by Representative Keith G. Sebelius, Republican of Kansas, found

that 43 per cent approved of impeachment, while 57 per cent did not.

"I don't think the impeachment issue has complicated my political life," he said. "I won big the last time (77 per cent of the vote) and besides inflation is by far the most important issue in my district."

The same sentiments were expressed by Representative Bill Archer, Republican of Texas, who said that the results of his newsletter poll showed that 69 per cent of his constituents supported the President.

Representatives Samuel H. Young and Philip M. Crane, Illinois Republicans, said the big issues in their districts had nothing to do with impeachment but were inflation, the energy shortage, mortgage money and, to a lesser degree, unemployment.

Representative Harold Runnels, Democrat of New Mexico, a conservative who is fence-straddling on the impeachment issue, said that his own poll showed that 55 per cent of his

constituent were against impeachment, but that to him even that did no mean much because "questioning people at the corner drugstore before the evidence is brought in is not the way to cast a vote."