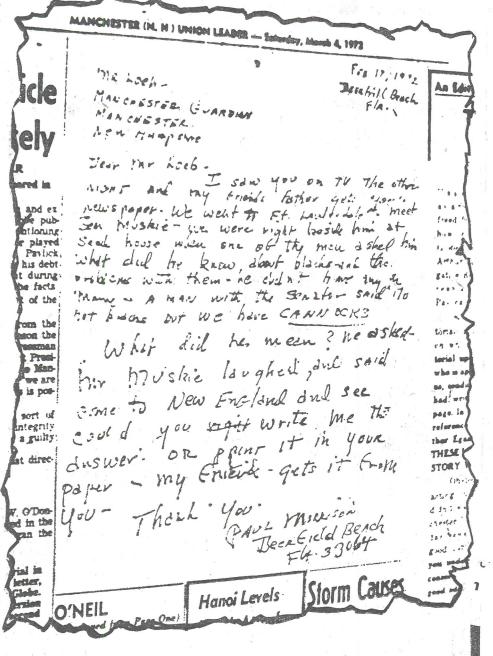
Muskie Demands Personal Nixon



Response to Charges

This letter appeared in the Manchester (N.H.) Union Leader Feb. 24.

By Carl Bernstein and Bob Woodward Washington Post Staff Writers

Sen. Edmund S. Muskie, identified by federal investigators as the victim of an elaborate White House hoax that apparently damaged his presidential campaign, demanded yesterday that President Nixon personally respond to information linking the President's staff to widespread acts of political spying and sabotage.

Muskie, without directly mentioning the celebrated "Canuck letter" episode that investigators say was engineered by a White House aide, also called for an independent investigation of what he called "the espionage activities of the President's staff."

The Maine senator, who apparently was victimized by an amazingly complicated chain of events that figured in his "crying speech" two weeks before the New Hampshire primary, said in a prepared state-

ment yesterday:

"These press reports (of a massive political spying-andsabotage campaign directed by did he know about blacks and White House and presidential the problems with them-He month-this one also signed re-election aides) suggest a po- didn't have any in Maine a "Harold W. Eldredge." litical opposition which is man with the senator said. No ruthless and unprincipled. blacks but we have Cannocks. These reports of wrongdoing by members of the White House staff are so serious that

Muskie, whose standing in Beach, Fla.," the New Hampshire polls began to slip immediately added: "The President should editorial—based on the lettell us if these reports are ter—under the headline: "Sen. true, how he proposes to get Muskie insults Franco-Ameriat the facts of these charges cans." and whether he condones this kind of political espionage op- a second anti-Muskie item, this eration . . . What's involved one a reprint of an unflatterhere is an alleged corruption ing article in Newsweek about of the political process with the senator's wife. When Mus-·which every citizen must be kie arrived to speak in front concerned."

whose name has not been re-slur on himself. vealed to The Washington Post by investigative sources.

doned a racial slur ("Can-began a search for Paul Morucks") French-Canadian descent.

Miss Berger said Clawson then told her he wrote the New Hampshire primary, the letter in hopes of damaging Union-Leader published a sec-Muskie because he was the ond letter related to the incistrongest potential opponent dent. to President Nixon. At another point in the conversation, said Miss Berger, Clawson re-Eldredge of Fort Lauderdale, ferred to writing the letter and said, "That's politics."

ton Post reporter, was inter-question about his knowledge viewed Monday and denied that he had claimed authorship of the "Canuck" letter, saying Miss Berger must have misunderstood him. "I know nothing about it," Clawson said, adding that the first time he heard of the matter was when "I saw it on television" following the Muskie "crying by reporter. speech."

The first "Canuck" letterthere were three—appeared in the Manchester (N.H.) Union never happened; both letters leader on Feb. 24. It said in part, in these words:

"We went to Ft. Lauderdale to meet Sen. Muskie . . . one aide, working with others. of the men asked him what What did he mean? We asked -Mr. Muskie laughed and said come to New England and they require a response by the President himself."

see. . . ." The letter was signed "Paul Morrison, Deerfield

The day the letter appeared in the Union Leader, the newsafter the "crying speech," paper also ran a front-page

The next day, the paper ran of the newspaper's office on According to federal agents Feb. 26, he broke down and who investigated the Water-cried, calling William Loeb, gate bugging incident the Can-uck letter incident was engi-"gutless coward" for printing neered by a White House aide an attack on his wife and a

The next day Muskie charged that the so-called However, Washington Post Canuck letter was a a hoax, staff writer Marilyn Berger and that the incident menhas reported that Ken W. tioned in Florida had never Clawson, deputy director of happened. Reporters who had White House communications, been at the Senator's side in volunterered to her in a Sept. Florida said they remembered 25 conversation, "I wrote the no such incident and several letter"—in which the author newspapers including Union said Sen. Muskie had con-Leader, according to Loeb-

on Americans of rison. He has never turned was paid \$1,000 to write the up.

On the Saturday before the

This letter came from a man letter-to-the-editors purporting to be Harold W. Fla., who—in his letter claimed to have been "the per-Clawson, a former Washing-son who asked Mr. Muskie the of the blacks."

> "The young man (Morrison) . . did not lie, he told the truth," the Eldredge letter said.

The Eldredge letter also produced an unsuccessful nationwide search for its author

According to federal agents, the Florida "Canuck" incident mentioned in both letters were part of an elaborate hoax and the whole project was engineered by a White House

Meanwhile, the Union Leader received a third letter last

It purports that its author two original letters, with promises of \$2,500 more to be paid after publication.

The Union Leader has yet to run the third letter in its column and has assigned the whole matter to its chief investigative reporter, according to publisher Loeb.