

Moynihan, in Valedictory, Urges Support for Nixon

By ROBERT B. SEMPLE Jr.

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WASHINGTON, Dec. 22—“Every time we get a little down, every time we need a little inspiration, we’re going to want to call him back to give it to us.”

In these and similar words, President Nixon paid tribute yesterday to Daniel Patrick Moynihan before about 200 principal officers of the Government, including the Cabinet, who had assembled in the East Room of the White House for a private, year-end meeting.

The tall, elegantly dressed but inescapably ruffled Mr. Moynihan then rose and gave an 18-minute valedictory of his own, a tape of which was made available to newsmen this afternoon. He is leaving to return to Harvard Jan. 1. To make certain that his final thoughts got across in clear and orderly fashion, he had written them down, and he read from a text. His peers gave him a standing ovation when he finished.

Realism and Romanticism

In his speech, Mr. Moynihan spoke not of himself or his role but of the country. At once witty and somber, his remarks combined a tough realism about the monumental tasks facing American government with more than a trace of Irish romanticism about what the Nixon Administration had thus far done about these problems.

Courteous and profoundly loyal to the President he has served for two years as an important adviser, he was not in the least bashful about scolding some of the President’s associates.

Mr. Moynihan said the Administration had inherited a country “not so much divided as fragmented” by the “elemental agony” of the war in Vietnam, “compounded by and interacted with the great travail of race.”

Moreover, he said, “the economic vitality of the nation was in peril.” In such circumstances, “confidence in American government eroded.” He asked, “How then could it be otherwise that the election of 1968 should begin in violence and end in ambiguity?”

Mr. Moynihan said that the President’s efforts to heal the nation had begun with the themes of his inaugural—“reconciliation and restraint”—and with the address itself—“the most commanding call to governance that the nation has heard in the long travail that has not yet ended.”

‘Remarkable’ Record

Since then, Mr. Moynihan continued, Mr. Nixon has compiled a “considerable and I think remarkable” record: reducing conflict abroad; moving “swiftly to endorse the profoundly important but fundamentally unfulfilled commitments, especially with respect to the poor and the oppressed, which the nation had made in the nineteen-sixties,” and “offering a critique of government the likes of which had not been heard in Washington since Woodrow Wilson.”

To these and other efforts, Mr. Moynihan ascribed the following results:

“Since that time, mass urban violence has all but disappeared, civil disobedience and protest

have receded, racial rhetoric has calmed, that great symbol of racial segregation, the dual school system in the South, virtually intact two years ago, has quietly and finally been dismantled.”

Lack of Appreciation

And yet, Mr. Moynihan complained, “how little the Administration seems to be credited with what it has achieved.” He attributed this to the nation’s “habit of reducing the most complex issues to the most simplistic moralisms,” and to the fact that “what was once primarily a disdain for government has developed into a genuine distrust.”

Myths and expectations “that cannot be satisfied” have been allowed to grow unchecked, he said, adding that the “rhetoric of crisis and conflict” casts doubt on the ability of any government, including the present Administration, to deal with the tasks at hand, and obscures the complexity of those problems.

“The political process reinforces and, to a degree, rewards the moralistic style, Mr. Moynihan said. “Elections are rarely our finest hours. This is when we tend to be most hysterical, most abusive, least thoughtful, and least respectful of complexity.”

Mr. Moynihan did not blame individual politicians, simply the process itself. But, since Mr. Nixon was a visible part of that process seven weeks ago, known to have been disturbed by the Administration’s law-and-order strategy, some of those who heard yesterday’s speech believed he meant his imprecision to apply to the White House as well as to the Democrats.

The strains, rigors, and accumulated aggravations of politics, Mr. Moynihan said, had begun to take their toll even on the “institution of the Presidency itself.” He contended that the time allowed the President to “speak for all the nation” had begun to run out.

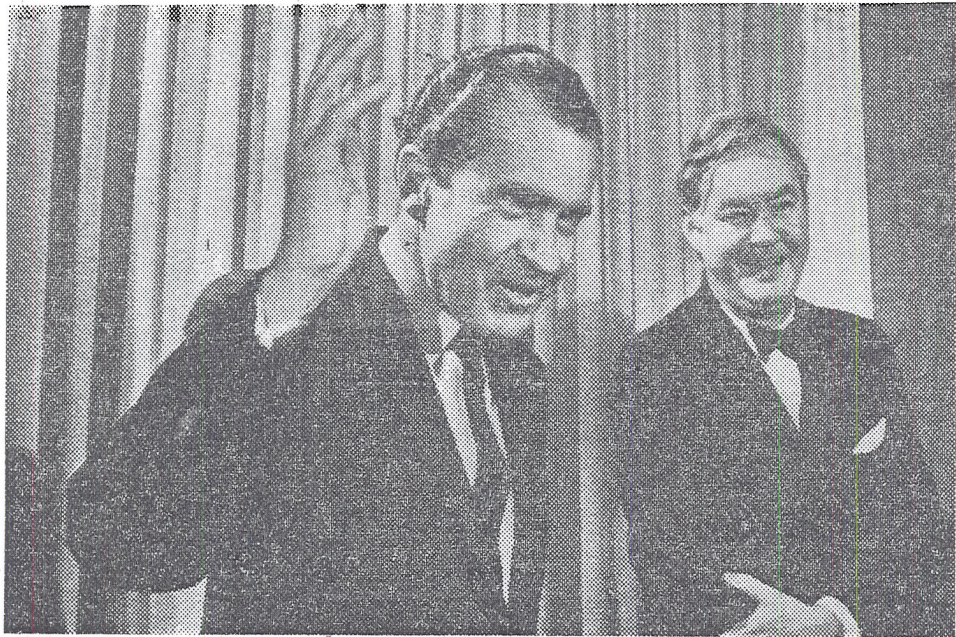
Advice on Conduct

“Too soon the struggle recommences,” he continued. “This has now happened to us. We might have had a bit more time, but no matter. The issue is henceforth how to conduct ourselves.”

Mr. Moynihan’s advice was threefold. First, he urged his audience to “be of good cheer,” to remain undaunted by “the depressing, even frightening things [that] are being said about the Administration,” and to take strength from knowledge that they labor for “a President of singular courage and compassion.” Second, he urged them to “resist the temptation to respond in kind” to their enemies.

Third, he urged his audience to be “far more attentive to what the President has said and proposed.”

“Time and again the President has said things of startling insight, taken positions of great political courage and intellectual daring, only to be greeted with silence or incomprehension even in our own ranks,” Mr. Moynihan said. “The prime consequence of this is that the people in the nation who take these matters seriously have never been re-



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DELIVERS FAREWELL: Daniel Patrick Moynihan, shown with President Nixon when he was named to post of Presidential Adviser, will return to Harvard University on Jan. 1.

quired to take us seriously." He continued:

"[The President's] initial thrusts were rarely followed up with a sustained, reasoned, reliable second and third order of advocacy. Deliberately or not, the impression was allowed to arise with respect to the widest range of Presidential initiatives that the President really wasn't behind them.

"It comes to this: The Presidency requires much of those who would serve it, and first of all it requires comprehension. It is not enough to know one's subject in one department; the President's men must know them all, must understand how one thing relates to another, must divine in the blade of grass the whole of life that is indeed contained there."

Mr. Moynihan named no culprits, but if he revealed himself in his remarks as a man who can combine bouquets and barbs, he also revealed himself as a man both happy and sorrowful after two years here—a man who has achieved some triumphs but whose single greatest effort, he feels, has been sabotaged by the inertia of his colleagues.

That effort was the Family Assistance Plan, Mr. Nixon's attempt to reform the welfare system by substituting direct cash payments to the poor for the present apparatus. Although the authorship of the program is not entirely Mr. Moynihan's—it is traceable in part to a task force paper done for Mr. Nixon during the preinaugural period—he has been among its most tireless lobbyists, inside the White House as well as on Capitol Hill. Yesterday the President called him "the man who brought that program into being and made it an Administration program."

The Family Assistance Plan is in serious trouble in Congress, which accounts for Mr. Moynihan's sorrow. But to some observers, the fact that he managed to persuade a Republican Administration to promote a form of guaranteed minimum income was victory enough—especially given Mr. Nixon's promise today that he would resubmit the plan next year.

There were other victories, too. As a longtime academic (with service on both Harvard and Massachusetts Institute of Technology faculties), he devised the Administration's educational reforms and persuaded the President to take a hands-

off approach to campus disorders in 1969 when others were urging forceful Federal intervention.

As an experienced bureaucrat (with service in both the Kennedy and Johnson Administrations), he sensed the danger of delaying a Budget Bureau proposal to reorganize the Federal system in the field, and pushed the idea through the White House before Congress could mobilize opposition.

As a professional social scientist, he tried to bring to his colleagues in the White House an appreciation that careful statistical analysis of social problems was a crucial part of the policy-making process.

There were disappointments, too. He started his tenure in the Administration as executive

director of the Urban Affairs Council, but later lost his administrative responsibilities when the council was merged in the Domestic Affairs Council. He then became a counselor to the President, a post from which he dispensed advice on a wide range of matters.

Some of this advice leaked to the press, and on one occasion a leak caused Mr. Moynihan considerable embarrassment. Last March 1, The New York Times published a private memorandum from Mr. Moynihan to President Nixon, dated Jan. 16, in which the counselor—after detailing the "extraordinary progress" that he said the blacks had made in the last decade—urged a period of "benign neglect" on the racial issue.