

Crowds in Alabama Give Nixon Warm Welcome

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—President Nixon toured the heart of George Wallace country today, calling for unity and cooperation between the races and receiving, in the process, a warm welcome that may well rekindle his hopes of capturing heavier Southern support in 1972.

The novelty of a Presidential visit to these parts plus the presence of Governor Wallace, who shared the platform with Mr. Nixon in Mobile and flew with him and three other Southern Governors on the Birmingham Leg, gave the day all the flavor and trappings of a Presidential campaign.

Although it was difficult to distinguish between those who came to see him out of affec-

tion and those who were merely curious, the crowds that lined the streets and jammed the intersections in both Mobile and Birmingham for Mr. Nixon's first Alabama visit since assuming office were large and enthusiastic.

Mr. Nixon returned the compliment, in both deed and word. He stopped his motorcade frequently to leap from his car and shake hands, and when he touched on the sensitive racial

issue in an informal speech to editors and publishers in Birmingham he suggested that the South had made more progress than the North in desegregating public schools.

"I have nothing but utter contempt for the double, hypocritical standards of those Northerners who look at the South and say: Why don't those Southerners do something about their race problem," he said.

The President then went on to cite statistics released by the Department of Health, Education and Welfare in January showing that 38 per cent of black children in the South now attend schools with white majorities, as opposed to 28 per cent in the North. He asserted that the North had made

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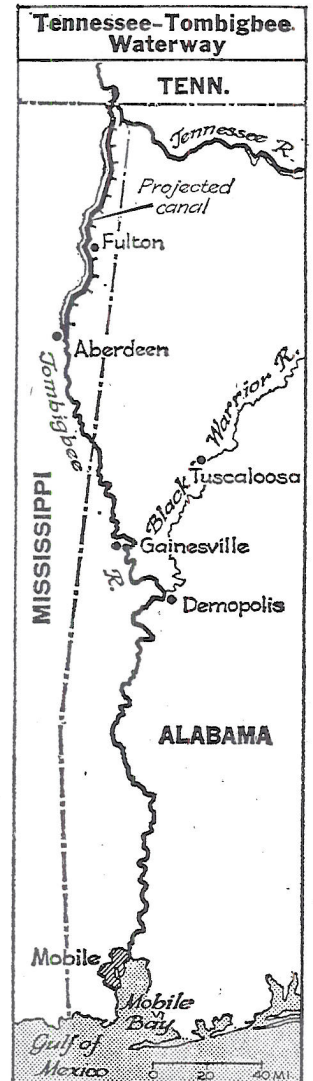
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WELCOMED TO ALABAMA: President Nixon being greeted by Gov. George C. Wallace on his arrival in Mobile yesterday. At the right is the Mayor of the city, Robert Doyle.



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Nixon Gets Warm Welcome in Alabama

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no perceptible inroads on the problem of racial isolation in the public schools in two years.

There were virtually no anti-war demonstrators in either city and—with the exception of a few mothers in Mobile carrying signs lettered "America Should Mean Freedom of Choice"—there was little visible evidence that Southerners were holding Mr. Nixon personally responsible for recent Supreme Court decisions speeding the pace of school desegregation.

Mindful, perhaps, that both Mobile and Birmingham will soon have to undertake more busing of Negro and white pupils to carry out the Court's orders, the President urged his audiences to resolve their differences "in a peaceful and constructive way."

"We cannot be a strong nation in a spiritual and moral and ideological sense if we are torn apart by regional differences, by racial differences, by religious differences, by differences between states, by differences between state government and Federal Government," he told a crowd gathered at the Alabama state docks in Mobile this morning for a ceremony dedicating the beginning of the Tennessee-Tombigbee Waterway.

For Joining Together

He said that such differences were not easily erased and would persist, but he added:

"Let us remember that what we must do is join together in working out those differences in a peaceful and constructive way . . . Let Americans today be united, North, East, West and South, all races and religions, for the great goals of peace, prosperity and opportunity for every American and every people in the world today."

The ostensible purpose of the President's visit to Mobile this morning was to begin construction on the Tennessee-Tombigbee Waterway Project, planned as a 253-mile link between the Tennessee River at the lower end of the Ohio River Basin and the Gulf of Mexico.

His visit to Birmingham this

afternoon, meanwhile, was designed originally to marshal support for his domestic programs among editors and publishers from 12 Southern states who assembled here and were briefed by high Administration officials. Mr. Nixon spoke to them at the conclusion of the briefing.

Mr. Nixon lost, without visible complaint, one cuff link during a crush in the Mobile motorcade, and when he spoke in both cities it was in the informal, arm-thrusting style reminiscent of campaign appearances.

Although the welcome in Mobile seemed the warmer of the two, there was evidence of first-rate advance work in both cities. His well-wishers seemed well-equipped with signs and flags, and in Mobile the President was able to take advantage of a lunchtime crowd.

Mr. Wallace, by contrast, re-

ceived a few scattered boos when the two men appeared in front of the Parliament Hotel here before the editor's briefing. While none of Mr. Nixon's strategists see any hope of carrying Alabama if Mr. Wallace is running in 1972, some of them seemed to think that the President's reception here today augured well for his chances in other Southern states where Mr. Wallace is less formidable.

Mr. Nixon touched on international issues in his public and private remarks. He told the editors and publishers assembled in Birmingham that he had been greatly encouraged by recent developments in the strategic arms limitations talks and had sensed "A significant change in our relations with the Soviet Union at the highest levels."

The prospects for "A full generation of peace," have

been further enhanced, he said, by the nation's gradual disengagement from the war in Vietnam, by recent indications of an improvement in long-term relations with the People's Republic of China, and by what he said were some signs of hope for a settlement in the Middle East.

At the same time, he insisted that it would be dangerous not only to the world but to America's own "sense of confidence" to pursue the advice of those who would rapidly withdraw from Global responsibilities.