

The Boiler Room Is Closed

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WASHINGTON — The old White House boiler room operation, where secretaries and flacks received the rigged telephone calls and telegrams that inevitably poured in after a presidential speech, has been shut down — another post-Watergate reform.

No longer do White House opinion manipulators attempt to puff up an appearance of public approval greater than it actually is. The calls coming into the switchboard these days are unsolicited, and if not representative, at least they are sincere.

Now the incoming calls are spread around to var-

White House Says It No Longer 'Creates' Support for Nixon

ious White House offices by the President's famously efficient switchboard operators. Everybody pitches in. After Nixon's latest Watergate speech, phone lights flickered for hours all through the White House and executive office building, as dozens of weary aides and secretaries listened to the opinions of well-wishers and critics from all over the nation.

According to a horseback estimate by Deputy Press Secretary Gerald Warren, the immediate public tele-

phone and telegraph response to Nixon's speech was support. Tallies kept by the call-takers, he said, ran 5-1 to 6-1 in favor of the President's position. "Thousands" of supporting telegrams came in during those first hours after the televised address, he said and "thousands" more were backed up on the machines.

In the old boiler room, those figures could have been pumped up to 10-1 or even 15-1, easily. Chuck Colson's "communications" staff or the boys from

"CREEP" needed only to give a nod, and the calls would have flooded the White House boards, each caller praising Nixon to high heaven.

But the boiler room blew up, so to speak, when it was exposed to light in one of those "eyes only" memos that John Dean turned over to the Senate Watergate Committee. The calls this time were real. (It should be noted, however, that some persons critical of the President might have been reluctant to phone or wire the White House, fearing they could wind up on a "political enemies" list or find themselves under investigation by the Secret Service.)