

Nixon Bids Officials in Knoxville Put Off Legal Action in Heckling

NY TIMES

4 JUN 70

WASHINGTON, June 5— President Nixon today urged officials in Knoxville, Tenn., to postpone legal action against professors and students who heckled him last week at a rally conducted by the Rev. Billy Graham on the campus of the University of Tennessee.

Leonard Garment, a special consultant to the President, said in a telegram to Mayor Leonard Rogers of Knoxville that Mr. Nixon considered the hecklers "rude, but not violent or substantially disruptive."

The police have issued 47 warrants against hecklers and have arrested 32 since the rally for violating an old state law that forbids "disruption of a religious service." Among those charged were three University of Tennessee faculty members.

Today, a member of the faculty telephoned Dr. Alexander Heard, chancellor of Vanderbilt University in Nashville, who is serving as a temporary consultant to the President on campus unrest. The faculty member explained that the arrests were becoming an issue at the Knoxville campus.

After consultations in the White House—they were said not to have included any discussions with Mr. Nixon himself—Mr. Garment sent the following telegram to Mayor Rogers:

"The President has asked me to request that you seriously consider postponing until after examinations action against students who demonstrated during his recent appearance in Knoxville.

"He considered their action rude, but not violent or substantially disruptive, and trusts that the reaction of local officials will be firm but carefully judicious."