

Into the Homestretch

by Tom Wicker

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Mr. Nixon campaigning for office ... is obviously a different proposition from "the President" being statesmanlike. Since he has never been an overly impressive performer on the road in any case, the possibility always exists that he will make a costly blunder or commit the kind of overkill of which he was guilty on the law-and-order issue in the final days of the 1970 Congressional campaign.

George McGovern, for one, says he doesn't look for an old pro like Mr. Nixon to "blow it," but what could happen was well illustrated in the blustery extemporaneous speech the President gave to the P.O.W. families in Washington the other day. ^[16 Oct]* After weeks of careful truce in his long war on the press, he lost his cool sufficiently to spout off suddenly that the "opinion-makers" had some kind of duty to support a President no matter what he decided. Even a public that does not much care for the press is not likely to buy that kind of anti-Democratic view - particularly since Mr. Nixon lumped businessmen and others with the "opinion-makers." The excitement of the arena could lead even an old rodeo bull into more such blunders.

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* See also editorial, NYTimes 19 Oct 72, filed Nixon.