

Time to Speak Out

Senator Barry Goldwater of Arizona displays a native shrewdness in taking an olfactory approach to the Watergate affair rather than a strictly judicial one. When he says that "there's a smell to it" that recalls the aura surrounding the Harding Government, he is not trying to abuse the present Administration but to persuade President Nixon to take forceful action to dispel an atmosphere in which public trust in that Administration is threatened.

That process is already far advanced, most significantly in the ranks of the President's own party. First came the forceful, if not always documented, attacks by Senator Weicker of Connecticut. These were soon followed by comments of concern by Republican Senators Scott of Pennsylvania and Mathias of Maryland, as well as by George Bush, the new G.O.P. national chairman, who demanded that the "grubby" case be "promptly and fully cleared up."

Then polls and surveys began to appear—notably in *The Christian Science Monitor* and *The Wall Street Journal*—indicating growing unrest among those who had enthusiastically supported Mr. Nixon only five months ago. Now Senator Goldwater reports "letters and calls from Republicans all around the country and they are saying, 'No more money to the Republican National Committee until this is cleared up.'" Tickets to a gala party dinner in May are reported to be going begging. And, by way of confirmation, Anne Armstrong, the President's own Counselor, says that the Arizona Senator is "absolutely right," that the party is indeed being hurt in its fund-raising efforts.

In these circumstances the President's political and moral responsibility—forgetting for the moment the legal and theoretical arguments—is to come forward and give an accounting to the country, preferably in the give-and-take of a press conference. If Mr. Nixon's top advisers are not to be condemned on hearsay—and they should not be, no matter how inevitable the suspicions—the one person who can prevent that injustice is the President himself. Secret testimony before a grand jury, as Senator Goldwater says, is no longer enough.

Mr. Nixon can clear the air over the White House only by publicly denying or confirming all the allegations that have grown out of the Watergate crime—and, if he confirms them, taking swift action appropriate to the offense.