

Nixon's Popularity Still at Low Point



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PRESIDENT NIXON is having difficulty in regaining the confidence of the American people. Only 32 per cent in the latest survey express approval of his performance as chief executive, one point above his low recorded in early August.

Concern over the economy is having an adverse effect on the President's popularity, as it has had on the popularity of previous Presidents.

At the present time, inflation far overshadows all other worries of the American people, with nine persons in every ten naming it as one of the top two problems facing the nation. The percentage naming inflation is the highest ever recorded in the history of the Gallup Poll, dating back to 1935.

In addition, Mr. Nixon is making little headway in terms of public confidence regarding Watergate. Despite his recent press conferences—in which he dealt with Watergate — as many Americans as before (3 in 4 in the latest survey) think he was involved in Watergate at least to some extent.

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AND FINALLY, the recent charges leveled against Vice President Spiro Agnew — that he accepted kickbacks from consulting engineers in return for state construction contracts in Maryland — may be compounding Mr. Nixon's difficulties in trying to win back public confidence on the Watergate issue.

This is the question which has been asked about the incumbent President

since the Roosevelt years to measure presidential popularity:

"Do you approve or disapprove of the way Mr. Nixon is handling his job as President?"

The table below shows the latest national findings:

Approve	32 per cent
Disapprove	59 per cent
No opinion	9 per cent

Many political observers are debating whether, given the current problems, Mr. Nixon can recoup his popularity losses.

Analysis of the popularity ratings of a previous President, Dwight Eisenhower, shows he recovered considerable ground after his popularity reached a low point.

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LARGELY as a result of economic factors — increasing unemployment and falling farm prices — Mr. Eisenhower's popularity dipped to a low point of 49 per cent approval in the spring of 1958. His stock with voters, however, rose sharply in subsequent surveys, coinciding with an upturn in the number of employed across the nation, as well as an upturn in voter confidence about the job outlook for the months ahead.

Because of a variety of factors operating in his favor, including economic factors, Mr. Eisenhower's popularity underwent a steady uphill climb, and by January of 1960 his approval rating was 71 per cent — an increase of 22 points over his low point.

The latest findings reported today are based on a national survey of 1505 adults, 18 years and older. Interviewing was conducted in person in more than 300 scientifically selected localities during the period September 21-24.