

California Poll Doesn't Support Nixon

What Public Thinks of

By Mervin D. Field

The California public does not agree with President Nixon's characterization of television coverage of Watergate and related matters as "outrageous, vicious and distorted." Two out of three (67 per cent) questioned in a just concluded survey by The California Poll are in

disagreement with Mr. Nixon about this.

In fact, public opinion is trending the other way — more people today think the media coverage has been fair and unbiased than thought so last May when the hearings first started, and there is no sign that people are tired of hearing about it.

The California Poll made

a survey of public opinion on these questions between October 27 and 30 and found that:

Today, 49 per cent of the public thinks the amount of news coverage of Watergate matters is justified, while 47 per cent think there has been too much. Last August, 51 per cent thought there was too much. In addition, there has been a sharp in-

crease in the number who think there should be even more coverage. In August, only 4 per cent said this, today 22 per cent think there has been "too little" coverage.

Today, 55 per cent of the public thinks press coverage has been fair and unbiased. Last May, 50 per cent thought this way. Further, the number who feel press

coverage has been unfair and biased has dropped from 27 per cent in May to 17 per cent today.

President Nixon's views of the media seem to be very much out of step with those of the people of his home state. When the cross-section of California adults was interviewed for this survey they were asked directly whether they agreed or disagreed with the President's statement on October 27 that television coverage of the Watergate issue was "outrageous, vicious, and distorted." A large majority (67 per cent) disagreed.

Agree with Nixon 31%
 Agree completely (14%)
 Agree somewhat (17%)

Disagree with Nixon 67%
 Disagree completely (45%)
 Disagree somewhat (22%)

No opinion 2%

Amount of press, radio and TV Watergate news coverage

	October	August
Too much	47%	51%
Right amount	27	41
Too little	22	4
No opinion	4	4

Opinions about fairness of coverage

	October	May
Fair and unbiased	55%	50%
Mixed	25	17
Unfair and biased	17	27
No opinion	3	6

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