

A Gesture

By Dorothy McCardle

With a miniature American flag in the lapel buttonhole of his dark business suit, President Nixon spent 40 minutes last night at the Embassy of Romania on 23d Street NW, making friends with strangers and influencing diplomats.

There was a round of applause from waiting guests when President and Mrs. Nixon walked into the jammed upstairs reception room at 6:30 p.m. They were the guests of Romania's President and Mrs. Nicolae Ceausescu at a reception arranged by Romanian Ambassador and Mrs. Corneliu Bogdan. It was a reciprocity gesture after the Nixons had had the visiting Romanians to dinner at the White House Tuesday night.

As the crowd hardly gave the presidential party breathing space, President Nixon seemed especially delighted to discover Han Hsu, deputy chief of the Chinese Liaison Mission here from Peking, and Han's associate, Chi Chao-chu, in the throng.

He told them that Romania's President Ceausescu had talked to him in 1967 about "opening up a dialogue with the People's Republic of China."

"So I always pay attention to what he says," said President Nixon, nodding toward the president of Romania. "That's Romania for you. Everybody's friend."

The Chinese from Peking had some news of their own. They had moved the day before from their temporary headquarters at the Mayflower Hotel to their permanent chancery at the Windsor Park Hotel.

George G. Gellert of New York City, president of a canned ham importing firm, took advantage of his unexpected proximity to the President of the United States to talk a little business.

"I imported \$10 million worth of canned ham from Romania this year," Gellert said as he had tagged after President Nixon to catch his attention.

"I may import \$15 million next year," Gellert persisted.

"Why not try for \$20 million?" the President suggested as Secretary of Agriculture and Mrs. Earl Butz tried without luck to make their way through the crowd to the President's side.

By then President Nixon had stopped to discuss Sec-

retary of State Henry Kissinger's taste in dancing girls with Soviet Ambassador Anatoliy F. Dobrynin. Nobody was sure whether Dobrynin had mentioned "belly dancers" or "ballet dancers." But the President laughed and went on to speak to the ambassadors of India and Pakistan and have a chat with the ambassador of Brazil.

As the President progressed slowly, circling the entire room, Mrs. Nixon, in a long pale blue gown, was being escorted around the opposite side of the room by the man who becomes Vice President of the United States today, Rep. Gerald Ford (R. Mich.).

Finally, the two parties joined forces and went across the hall to a private sitting room. There President Nixon and President Ceausescu sat down on a sofa together with an interpreter leaning between them. In chairs on each side of the sofa were Jerry Ford and Chief Justice Warren E. Burger. Sen. Hugh Scott (R-Pa.), minority leader of the Senate, soon joined them. Ford and Scott lighted up their pipes — a trademark of both.

The Nixons were on the verge of leaving when Secretary Kissinger arrived and hurried in to sit on the sofa with the two Presidents.

At a sign from President Nixon, Pat Nixon left her own sofa across the room where she had been sitting with Mrs. Ceausescu and Mrs. Bogdan and headed down the staircase just as President Nixon's private secretary, Rose Mary Woods, was coming up the stairs.

Mrs. Nixon put her arms around Miss Woods and kissed her.

"She kissed you!" a guest exclaimed.

"She always kisses me," said Miss Woods, who looked drawn after another day in court, testifying about the missing 18¼-minute portion of a White House tape in the Watergate case.

"You have had a rough time," someone told her.

"All life is rugged," she said and disappeared in the crowd with her escort, Robert Gray, who served at the White House in the Eisenhower administration.

President Ceausescu leaves Washington today.

of Presidential Reciprocity



By Bob Burchette—The Washington Post

President and Mrs. Nicolae Ceausescu wave goodbye to President and Mrs. Nixon as the Nixons depart in the presidential limousine.