

Adding Apples And Oranges

A Commentary

By Nicholas von Hoj, man

All comparisons of Richard Nixon with other Presidents are invidious but people insist on making them. It is pointed out that while Thomas Jefferson went \$20,000 in debt occupying the office that President Truthful now honors, Richard Nixon has spent his time in the White House becoming a millionaire. Others remark that while Washington never told a lie, Nixon never told the truth.

A more immediately instructive comparison might be drawn, however, between our presidential tax loop-holer's manner of living off the public purse and Ralph Nader, a man a small minority of us would like to see in Nixon's job. The exchange would be like putting a tourniquet on the U.S. Treasury.

Fortune Magazine (see "The Imperial Life Style of the U.S. President" by Dan Cordtz in the October issue) says that the White House staff under Nixon has prob-

ably tripled since the Johnson years. The adverb probably must be used since the actual White House budget is a more closely kept secret than the details of such national security items as the Milk Deal.

If it came from an antiadministration source I wouldn't believe it but Fortune says, "One aide walks beside the President to tell him in advance whether to turn left or right at a corner or warn of the number of steps in a staircase. The ranks of such courtiers have increased at an unprecedented rate during the Nixon administration."

The magazine has counted 75 maids, butlers, cooks and caretakers attending Mr. N in addition to five Boeing 707s (up two from Johnson), 16 specially sound-proofed helicopters and a fleet of 11 Lockheed Jet-stars needed to transport him and the rest of the Czar's entourage around.

"Ladybird Johnson rode the Eastern Airline shuttle on shopping trips to New York," Fortune informs us, "but the Nixon family, including his daughters and sons-in-law, habitually travels by government plane. Even Ron Ziegler has been known to use an official helicopter to fly from San Clemente to a party in Hollywood . . . an official car (transports) Mr. Nixon's Irish setter, King Timahoe, to Camp David in solitary grandeur."

Compare this to Nader, who lives in an \$80 a month furnished room and has no servants, no cars and no airplane. His gross living expenses are about \$5,000 a year, or roughly what it costs the public to support Nixon for a morning, a morning no doubt devoted to working out some new, perfectly legal, sleazy deal.

Nader operates out of a small pedestrian office.

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Nixon has no less than nine different offices, including one set up at his friend Robert Abplanalp's house, and two each at San Clemente and Camp David. Why a man needs two private offices in the same place has yet to be explained by General Haig & Haig, the President's personal conjurer of malevolent spirits.

Speaking of Camp David, Fortune, which has grown accustomed to the *la vie luxe* of the world's most powerful executives, reports in tones almost shocked that, "Since Nixon became President, several of the lodges at Camp David have been rebuilt and others redecorated. A heated free-form swimming pool has been installed to go with the existing bowling alley, archery and skeet ranges, pool table, tennis courts, pitch-and-putt golf green and nature trails."

All of this is government owned and maintained at public expense, and you would like to think it would be enough, but he has to have four houses, counting San Clemente, which even Fortune says was bought through a "sweetheart loan."

No wonder he has no time to run the country. Just getting to and using all those facilities must be an all-consuming operation. Nader on the other hand puts in an 18- to 20-hour day or a 126-hour working week

which means if we elected him President he'd be too busy to collect houses. Anyway, he's too stingy.

Thomas Whiteside in a New Yorker magazine profile says, "To save stamps and stationery Nader states in his ads that the money sent in by contributors won't be acknowledged." If only Nixon had confined himself to written thank-yous with his illegal oil contributors.

Moving about with a manila folder and nobody to tell him when to turn right or left, Nader is given at least partial credit for a list of legislation that goes far beyond automobiles, among which are the Natural Gas Pipeline Safety Act, the Radiation Control Act, the Wholesome Meat Act, the Wholesome Poultry Products Act, the Occupational Safety and Health Act, and on and on and all done without the service of a single butler. Nader has probably saved more lives than Nixon/Kissinger have rubbed out.

It is crazy. People say that America is too old and too crooked to take an honest President, but a Nader inauguration would be a gas. Can't you see him after getting himself inaugurated, going over to the rooming house and packing his other suit in his beat-up bag, and then walking over to the White House and telling the guard on the gate that Nixon's fanfare blowers can go home because he's just signed the lease?