

WXPost  
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JAN 22 1974

## The Difference a Year Makes

To appreciate how far Mr. Nixon has fallen, one must recall the sweep of his confidence just a year ago.

The loyal opposition had been reduced to less than dust beneath his chariot wheels, and the world was his inexhaustible oyster. Having run and won his last election race, job insecurity was a thing of the turbulent past. He began ruling like a Tory squire, as if to the manner born.

Before the dust from the 1972 landslide settled he sent forth his chief-of-staff, H. R. Haldeman, the most secure man in Washington, to demand resignations from just about everyone. Then Mr. Nixon went up to the mountain top, to Camp David, to preside over a purge of his administration.

Of course there were some fortunate men who received the inestimable blessing of being invited into the second administration. Barry Goldwater went up to the mountain to entreat Mr. Nixon to keep Mr. Goldwater's friend, Richard Kleindienst, as Attorney General. Elliot Richardson went up there and came down as Secretary of Defense.

A more symbolic appointment was Claude Brinegar as Secretary of Transportation. Mr. Brinegar was a businessman of accomplishment. But he had no experience in government and had no political following that might enable him to act independently.

But just to make sure the leash stayed taut, Mr. Nixon's chief domestic adviser, John Ehrlichman, sent over his principal aide as under secretary. This aide was Egil Krogh, not all of whose prior government experience had concerned transportation problems.

Having consolidated his power, Mr. Nixon paused to give a newspaper in-

terview. Sounding avuncular and promising paternalism, he said the average American should be treated like "a child in the family."

Then on January 20, in his second Inaugural Address, he, like God (or any President), looked upon his work and found it good.

Noting that "our children have been taught to be ashamed of their country," he promised an era of "civility and decency." He reminded us that "when we met here four years ago, America was bleak in spirit" and he promised to revive that spirit.

He promised policies that would "locate responsibility in more places," adding: "From this day forward, let

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each of us make a solemn commitment in his own heart: to bear his responsibility . . ." He could not have anticipated how much time the nation would soon devote to assigning "responsibility."

Then at a January 31 press conference Mr. Nixon expressed with remarkable directness the philosophy of presidential supremacy that underlay his post-landslide aggressiveness:

" . . . The Congress represents special interests . . . but there is only one place in this government where some-

body has got to speak not for the special interests which the Congress represents but for the general interest . . . and I am going to stand for that general interest."

This statement was too much for those conservatives who did not exempt Mr. Nixon from their general suspicion of people who concentrate political power. National Review, the conservative publication to which I am attached, pointed the moral:

"Mr. Nixon is moving to intensify the power, if not the bigness, of government, and specifically the power of the executive arm of the ruler. He is doing so, moreover, openly and even provocatively . . .

"Nixon's enhancement of the executive power points toward a mode of governing that has precedents in modern history, though it takes its name—*Caesarism*—through analogy to another era. Caesarism is not plain monarchy or dictatorship, but an evolution from mass democracy. In essence, Caesarism means rule that bypasses the 'intermediary institutions' of the given social and political structure interest, on the relation between the leader and the masses. Mr. Nixon states that *he* now holds a mandate from 'the expressed will of the people.' (The election of an anti-Nixon congressional majority presumably did *not* manifest 'the expressed will of the people.') . . . And he purges those of his associates and assistants who, having an independent base of political power, constituted another layer of intermediaries between ruler and subjects."

Mr. Nixon, who was casual about intermediary institutions, can no longer derive authority from the "will of the people." That will has changed. Fortunately, the institutions remain.