

'74 Elections -- GOP Hurt?

THE AMERICAN people might find the energy crisis and inflation the most pressing issues of the day and Watergate a distant third — as the polls indicated — but for Congress the possible impeachment of President Nixon remained equally urgent and more embarrassing.

On Tuesday Senator Barry Goldwater disclosed that a private poll taken for him showed that Watergate would cause a 10 per cent loss of votes for all Republican candidates in 1974.

Only two months ago, Goldwater said, his poll showed Watergate was hurting Democrats as much as Republicans — a pox on ALL politicians was the feeling. "Now," he said, "the poll indicates Watergate is going to hurt only Republicans. We'll lose in the Senate, no question about it."

'A Strong Feeling'

Still, Goldwater said he had seen nothing indicating that President Nixon should either be asked to resign or forced to face the impeachment process, but "I can sense a strong feeling right here on the Hill, and you're going to see it more and more as weeks go on, that many Republican members of Congress would like to run this year without Mr. Nixon."

The latest George Gallup Poll seemed to bear him out: 40 per cent of those questioned believed the President should resign but only 37 per cent were in favor of impeachment. An equal number (46) did not think he should resign and 53 per cent thought he should not be forced out of office.

The Harris Poll, taken a few days later, was less favorable to the President. If Judge John Sirica "were to decide that the President was negligent in the care he took of the Watergate tapes," 48 per cent thought he should be impeached with only 40 per cent against.

The credibility gap — even before the testimony of technical men suggested the 18½ minute gap in one tape had been deliberately erased — according to the Harris Poll, was startling:

Fifty-nine per cent thought the 18½ minutes were deliberately erased; 58 per cent did "not believe President Nixon when he said that two of the nine taped conversations Judge Sirica wanted were never recorded in the first place"; 55 per cent be-

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lieved the two entirely missing tapes were "ordered destroyed because they would have proved Mr. Nixon knew about the Watergate coverup."

Grand Jury

Even as the pollsters were running answers through their computers to find the pulse of the American people, Judge Sirica was asking Watergate Special Prosecutor Leon Jaworski to conduct a grand jury investigation into "the possibility of unlawful destruction of evidence."

He referred to the missing 18½ minutes and to short gaps in two other conversa-

tions — the first was the President's conversation with his chief aide, H. R. Haldeman, June 20, 1972 (three days after the Watergate break-in); the second was a 38-second gap in the June 20, 1972 talk with former Attorney General John Mitchell; the last was a missing 57 seconds in the April 15, 1973 meeting with ex-White House counsel John Dean III.

The White House had promptly pledged to "cooperate totally" with Jaworski and the FBI. Said Deputy Press Secretary Gerald Warren: "He (President Nixon) wants to get to the bottom of the situation."

While the FBI swarmed over the Key Biscayne offices of Rose Mary Woods, the President's private secretary, Stephen Bull (keeper of the tapes); General John Bennett, another tape-keeper; J. Fred Buzhardt Jr., a presidential counsel, and the records of President Nixon himself, there were other developments not necessarily connected with the tapes.

Taxes and 'Loyalty'

● Edward Morgan resigned as Assistant Secretary of the Treasury. "I can't say it's totally unrelated" to Jaworski and IRS questions about the President's income tax deductions, said Morgan. It was Morgan who signed the deed turning Mr. Nixon's vice presidential papers over to the National Archives, which permitted the President to save possibly \$200,000 in taxes.

A week ago Morgan and Edward DeMarco, the President's tax lawyer, reportedly told investigators the copy



PORTER

of the deed was signed more than a year after the date that appeared on the deed — March 27, 1969 — and thus after such tax deductions would have been legal.

● Herbert L. Porter, former scheduling director for the Committee for the Re-Election of the President, prepared to plead guilty to a count of lying to FBI agents investigating Watergate.

In a Washington, D.C., District court on Monday Porter said he still had "a deep sense of loyalty" to the President. "I'm disappointed, not so much in what he's done or hasn't done — the jury's still out on that — but I'm disappointed in the advice he is taking. They say one thing one day, another thing another day ..."

Moorer Recalls

● After at first denying he had received any unauthorized documents taken from the National Security Council, Admiral Thomas Moorer, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, suddenly recalled a week ago that some had crossed his desk.

But he called the contention of David Young, head of the "Plumbers," that a military "spy ring" was uncovered passing sensitive information to the Pentagon, "ridiculous." It was just "overzealousness and over-exuberance."