

NIXON ISSUE STIRS VERMONT DEBATE

Impeachment Question Is on
Town Meeting Agenda

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THETFORD, Vt., March 3—When the residents of this small town hold their annual town meeting tomorrow night, they will debate the merits of Richard M. Nixon's Presidency and whether an impeachment resolution should be presented to Congress.

It is a debate that may be held in a number of Vermont towns, but Thetford is the only community in the state in which 5 per cent of the registered voters have signed a petition to place the issue on the meeting's agenda.

This in itself has stirred a debate in the six villages that make up Thetford, a Connecticut River community about 30 miles southeast of Barre. The issue appears to be not only over the President but also whether a town meeting is the proper place to discuss national affairs.

"The whole nation is concerned about national issues but nobody is going to solve Thetford's problems but Thetford," said Matthew L. Wiencke, the meeting's moderator and a professor at nearby Dartmouth College.

Professor Wiencke said he was more concerned about Thetford's growing school enrollment. The local elementary school has been forced to rent a mobile classroom and rooms in the North Thetford Library and the Thetford Hill Church to handle its expansion.

George A. Phelps, chairman of the three-man Board of Selectmen, said he was "disgusted" and that the impeachment issue had "nothing to do with the town."

He said the issue had been



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JOINT FLIGHT EMBLEM:
Design chosen for the
U.S.-Soviet Union space
flight scheduled for July,
1975. Soyuz is printed
in Cyrillic. Two space-
craft are depicted docked
together in earth orbit.

raised by "the local liberal Democratic party," adding that "the old Democrats don't even go to meetings any more."

Mrs. Emily H. Hood, the Town Clerk, said she was more concerned with Thetford's rapid growth in the last few years. The town now has a population of 1,500—and said the town needed a subdivision ordinance.

The impeachment debate has it adherents, too. Mrs. Jacqueline Lucy, chairman of the town's Democratic party, said the Democrats held a meeting last fall and "we decided then that if Nixon was still in office at town meeting time, we would do something."

Mrs. Lucy has had help from Neil G. Kotler, who is working on his doctoral dissertation on town government for the University of Chicago. "Town meetings in the past rose above parochial concerns and acted upon urgent national issues," he said.

A random sampling here finds more Nixon supporters than detractors. The town voted for Mr. Nixon in his three Presidential campaigns, but the margin in 1972, 350 to 254, was the closest ever.