

President 'Campaigning' To Display His Strength

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By JOHN HERBERS MAR 18 1974
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WASHINGTON, March 17— President Nixon's public appearances about the country are taking on the flavor and scope of a national political campaign.

Mr. Nixon has stepped up the number and variety of his public contacts as he seeks to show himself as a President firmly in control of his job and unperturbed by impeachment proceedings.

Some of his appearances, as in Nashville last night, have all the trappings of a campaign stop shortly before an election—crowds, banners, bands, advancement, controversy and crowd-pleasing oratory.

Meanwhile, Representative John B. Anderson of Illinois, chairman of the House Republican Conference, praised the Judiciary Committee's handling of the impeachment inquiry, saying it was acting "circumspectly and carefully and cautiously." [Details on Page 20.]

Mr. Nixon returned to Washington shortly before midnight, and this morning, wearing a St. Patrick's day shamrock given him by the Ambassador from Ireland, John Gerald Mallow, he was host at church services in the East Room.

The Rev. Dr. Norman Vincent Peale delivered the sermon before 350 guests, including a group of Congressmen. Missing, however, was Mrs. Nixon, who was suffering from the flu.

On Tuesday, the President will fly to Houston and submit to questioning by members of the National Association of Broadcasters.

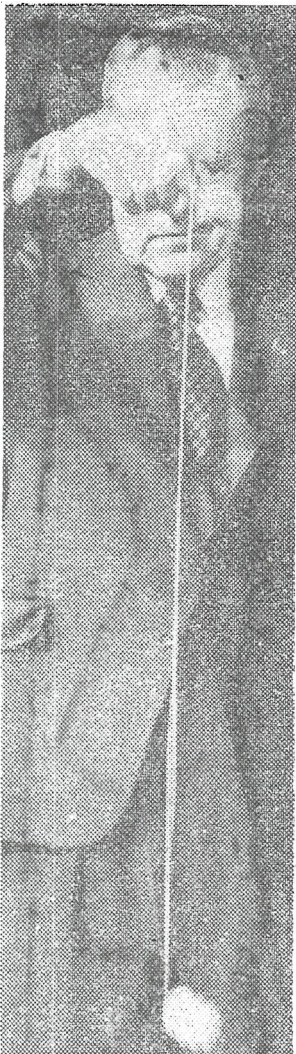
All of his appearances appear to be calculated to draw a friendly reception with just enough opposition to add interest, and the Nashville rally was no exception. Ostensibly, he was there to help dedicate a new hall for the Grand Ole Opry, and he did that. But all the noise and ceremony at the airport was a clear signal that much else was involved.

Airport hangars are drafty

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and acoustically ill-suited for public meetings. They are hardly ever used by national political figures except in the



Associated Press

President Nixon had problems with a yo-yo at the Grand Ole Opry on Saturday night.

height of a campaign. But at the Tennessee Air National Guard yesterday, a big hangar was the center of activity long before Mr. Nixon arrived.

White House technicians had been there five days trying to install a public address system that would eliminate echoes. Signs and bleachers had been set up. Secret Service agents, National Guardsmen and state troopers milled about as the crowds began to trickle in. First there were the friendly people asked to attend by local Republican leaders, who moved about handing out pro-Nixon banners.

Tennessee is a new stronghold of Republicanism, where Mr. Nixon has carried large majorities and where both United States Senators and the Governor are Republicans. Gov. Winfield Dunn had employed state personnel to help set up



United Press-International

President Nixon singing along as he played the piano in Grand Ole Opry ceremony Saturday night in Nashville.

President Presses 'Campaign' To Project Image of Of Strength

the rally.

Bands arrived two hours before the President and played, alternately, martial and country music. Scores of American flags were distributed in the audience. The scene began to take on a festive air.

Words of a song entitled "Stand Up and Cheer For Richard Nixon" were distributed among the crowd and country combo led the singing, to the tune of "Okie From Muscogee" included the following:

I'm sick of what I'm reading in the papers.

I'm tired of all that trash on TV, Stand up and cheer for Richard Nixon...

I've been hearing talk about impeaching

The man we chose to lead us through these times.

But talk like this could weaken and defeat us.

Let's show the world we're not the quitting kind.

After that, anti-Nixon demonstrators arrived carrying signs such as "If it was wrong why did you do it?" and "Opry yes, Nixon no." But the hangar was filled by then and they had to remain outside, where they could not confront the President and most of the crowd.

When Mr. Nixon's big blue-and-silver jet, the Spirit of '76, arrived shortly before 6 P.M., the crowd numbered several

thousand and was in a frenzy as the band played "The Tennessee Waltz" and "Hall to the Chief."

A few minutes later an almost identical blue-and-silver Air Force jet, carrying Mrs. Nixon from South America, arrived and pulled up majestically directly in front of the crowd.

The President, his hair blown by the wind, waved and boarded Mrs. Nixon's plane. Then they descended together and approached the microphones with Governor Dunn.

In a few moments, Mr. Nixon was talking about national defense and warning that "the United States must never become the second-strongest nation in the world." The anti-Nixon demonstrators, numbering perhaps a hundred or so, screamed slogans, but could not be heard above the cheering.

After a few moments of this, the Nixons were whisked to the Opry Hall a few miles away, where the President was soon playing the piano, jerking a yo-yo with Roy Acuff and turning Nashville's love of country music to his current political theme: That what is important is patriotism and national defense, not Watergate.