

Nixon—A Strategy Geared to Defense

By Jack Anderson

President Nixon's total legislative-public relations strategy reportedly is now geared to defending himself from impeachment and conviction.

Sources privy to the inner councils says the White House has compiled a list of 34 to 39 hardcore conservative senators whose votes the President is counting upon to save himself from removal. All he needs are 34 votes to prevent the Senate from throwing him out of office.

The President is partly tailoring his legislative program, say our sources, to appeal to the diehard senators. Since they are all strong conservatives, he will take a stand against certain consumer, environmental and social programs they despise.

Already he has backed away from the Consumer Protection Agency that his consumer adviser, Virginia Knauer, has been pushing. He has also let oil-and-gas senators know that he is fighting to exempt refineries from the environmental laws and to lift the regulation of natural gas.

At the same time, the President has carefully selected friendly, conservative audi-

ences for his public appearances. As a veteran politician, he knows the trigger lines that will evoke applause, and he wants conservative senators to hear their supporters applauding the President.

He is also using psychological political warfare, say our sources, in his fight against impeachment. He knows most politicians are cautious, and some are downright timid. They would rather avoid a confrontation.

They almost always prefer to work out an amicable compromise in the back rooms.

This explains the growing clamor from the leaders on Capitol Hill for him to resign. They would like him to go away quietly and, thereby, avoid a nasty impeachment fight. Rep. Wilbur Mills (D-Ark.), probably the most powerful member of Congress, has even offered to introduce legislation granting Mr. Nixon immunity from prosecution if he will resign.

But the President is throwing down the gauntlet and threatening a bruising battle. Our sources say he is counting on the Capitol Hill crowd to back off out of normal political caution.

But the members of Congress have an even greater political urge to be re-elected, so in the end they probably will do what they think the voters wish.

Footnote: A White House spokesman denied that President Nixon is tailoring his legislation to impeachment, calling the charges ridiculous.

Food Prices—Prices at the supermarket are continuing a steady climb. Yet the wholesale prices of many foods are dropping.

It's not too difficult to discover where the housewives' extra dollars are going.

Beef on the hoof, for example, has dropped nearly \$8 per hundredweight, and pork has gone down \$9 since January.

Yet Missouri Beef, one of the nation's largest meatpackers, has seen profits zoom a fantastic 255 per cent in the last quarter. Iowa Beef, another giant, rang up a 39 per cent increase in profits, and General Host, the owner of Swift Meats, recorded a 43 per cent rise.

Nor are the supermarkets suffering. A&P, the nation's largest food chain, reported a 50-cent per share increase in earnings this quarter.

Marcor, the owner of Jewel,

watched its profits soar 61 per cent. Winn-Dixie, Giant, Lucky and Pueblo Stores are also enjoying healthy profits.

The losers are not only the consumers but the farmers. Agriculture Department sources tell us that feed grains are so high that some cattlemen are losing \$150 to \$200 a head.

In short, the processors and retailers are paying less but charging more for food, and then pocketing the difference. The prices that the shoppers pay remain high, therefore, while the prices the farmers receive are low.

The reasons aren't too difficult to figure out. Often two or three major chain stores dominate over 50 per cent of food sales in a given area. There have been charges of an unspoken "gentlemen's agreement" in some situations to keep prices and profits high.

The Federal Trade Commission is investigating some of the most blatant offenders. But there is no coordinated government policy to prevent food profiteering. And unless bread lines become as long as gas lines, there probably won't be.