

Citizens Differ on Nixon's Tax Woes

By John Saar

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Sixteen of 22 taxpayers interviewed here yesterday said they were not satisfied with President Nixon's conduct regarding his income tax even though he has agreed to pay \$467,000 in additional taxes and interest.

In a limited opinion sampling taken among some of Mr. Nixon's fellow taxpayers who were straightening out their own tax affairs at the Internal Revenue Service offices at 1201 E Street NW, the majority pressed disapproval of the President's personal income tax affairs.

Some individuals criticized the President for taking improper deductions and said they were not mollified by his agreement to pay the additional taxes ruled due by the Internal Revenue Service. A few thought he ought to pay a penalty.

The six who professed themselves satisfied with the President's conduct attributed his

problems to honest mistakes, poor advice, slanted newspaper writing, political enemies and incompetence by the IRS in failing to pick up the improper deductions when the returns were first submitted.

Howard Cook, a swimming pool builder from Landover, said that, like Mr. Nixon, he owed back taxes: "I owe \$1,500. The difference between him and me is that he tried to hide it. I knew I'd have to pay when I came in, it's for 1972 and 1973 income."

Then, in a view echoed by many others, Cook asked, "If he doesn't pay his taxes, how can they expect citizens to pay theirs?"

Geographer Kip Willett, newly returned from four years in Brazil and using a pocket calculator to figure his arrears of taxes, said he was "very upset" by the President's income tax difficulties.

"The payment doesn't write it off for me," Willett said, "This is good grounds for impeachment—the best, I think."

Leaving with her own com-

pleted papers tucked under her arm, Mary Cloutman said: "The whole business is pretty sad. This is evidence of corruption all the way through."

Riding in the same elevator, store owner Artis Henson agreed. He called the President's charitable deduction for the gift of official papers "a fraudulent deal because it was not signed by him and it was predated."

"My general reaction," said Henson, "is we have someone trying to lead us who cannot do so because he is breaking the law himself."

An IRS spokesman said Wednesday that no fraud penalty had been asserted against Mr. Nixon, "because we did not believe it was warranted."

That statement has not entirely cleared the air for dentist's assistant Moezonn Prescott. "He should have been treated the way the rest of the public is; if he doesn't pay his taxes, he should be penalized," Prescott said.

A retired government worker who declined to be

named held the opposite view — arguing that the President has been targeted for specially unfavorable attention: "Everybody is entitled to make an honest mistake," he said. "Why shouldn't he be treated the same way." Other presidents had amassed huge fortunes without the same degree of scrutiny, he added.

Jessie Blaine felt the President was being treated "shamefully."

"I don't think he should have to pay any more taxes," she said. "The IRS accepted his taxes the first time. It's pure politics."

A veteran tax examiner, who said he could not be named, was glad to see headlines over newspaper stories on the President's decision to pay back taxes. "It was good because we've been getting repercussions in here," he said. "People won't come out and say it but what they mean is 'If President Nixon only pays a little bit of tax, why should I pay?'"