

Nixon Plans to Campaign In Michigan House Race

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By R. W. APPLE Jr. APR 6 1974

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WASHINGTON, April 5—In the face of his Watergate and income-tax troubles, President Nixon decided today to campaign in Michigan next week in hopes of salvaging a Republican victory in a closely contested special election.

The White House said that Mr. Nixon would make a one-day trip to the Eighth Congressional District in Michigan, where James M. Sparling Jr., a Republican who worked briefly for Mr. Nixon last year, is running against Robert Traxler, a Democrat.

For the President, the trip—his first this year to aid a Republican candidate—represents a considerable gamble. Should Mr. Sparling lose, it would be said that Mr. Nixon's personal unpopularity helped drag him down to defeat.

For Mr. Sparling, similarly, the trip is a gamble. He said this morning that he was "very pleased the President has accepted my invitation."

Earlier this week, however, the Republican candidate had suggested that he held an ambiguous view toward Mr. Nixon, remarking that he was not asking the President in hopes of helping his own candidacy.

"I am inviting the President to defend himself on Watergate and his economic policies," Mr. Sparling said at that time. "I thought he ought to get out of the White House and meet the people. If he is found guilty of any wrongdoing, then he will get a vote of impeachment from me."

Despite that disclaimer, Michigan political sources said that Mr. Nixon and Mr. Spar-

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ling would appear together on Wednesday, which will tie them together in the public mind and could help turn the election into a referendum on the President, who stands at only 25 per cent in national popularity polls.

In addition, the President's trip will almost certainly be taken as a first indication of public response to his agreement to pay \$467,000 in delinquent taxes and interest.

White House sources said Mr. Nixon had decided to make the trip, which was announced just before he left for Paris to attend memorial service tomorrow for President Pompidou of France, because he is convinced that his prompt agreement to pay has improved his public standing.

Speech and a Rally

The President is expected to spend about three hours in the district. His schedule will probably include a speech either in Bay City or Saginaw, which

are the two main cities in the district, as well as a rally in a more rural area. Republican officials said.

[United Press International reported that The Saginaw



J. Bob Traxler



Associated Press

James M. Sparling Jr.

News, which twice endorsed Mr. Nixon for the Presidency, in an editorial Friday called for him to resign. The press service quoted the paper as saying "... resignation is

now the highest and most selfless act he can perform to his fellow countrymen."]

Michigan Republicans have openly squabbled over whether the President would help or hurt Mr. Sparling. The state chairman, William McLaughlin, reluctantly joined in the invitation to Mr. Nixon, but the Saginaw County chairman, Robert Grant, said he did not "want any part" of a Presidential visit to Michigan.

"I definitely think it will benefit my candidacy," Mr. Traxler said today in Saginaw, "in the sense that it will focus on the main issue: The failings of the Nixon Administration. It will place the emphasis on Nixon."

The Michigan special election, which is set for April 16, will be the fifth this year. The Democrats have won three of the previous four, and in all of them, the Republican candidates have de-emphasized President Nixon.

"We've tried everything else and it hasn't worked," said a Republican official in Washington. "So we may as well try this, risky as it is."