

WXPPost Nixon Gets Friendly Reception in Mich.

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SANDUSKY, Mich., April 10—President Nixon took the burdens of Watergate to the campaign trail for the first time today and got a generally friendly reception from a heavily Republican farm area.

But even here, Mr. Nixon was greeted by demonstrators who apparently prompted him to address a crowd of several thousand through the open roof of his bullet-proof limousine. A special platform had been prepared for him.

The tour was made for James Sparling, a Republican congressional candidate who invited Mr. Nixon, but who said he wouldn't hesitate to vote for impeachment if the facts warranted.

Republican leaders said afterward they believed it had helped Sparling, but local Democrats claimed the visit could bring home Watergate to local voters and help elect a Democrat to Congress for the first time in 40 years.

Everywhere Mr. Nixon went during the 57-mile motorcade that rambled through Michigan's thumb, he was greeted by cheering crowds that outnumbered and outshouted protesters calling for his impeachment.

When the President spoke, it was on issues with appeal to the area.

At the Tri-City Airport between Saginaw and Bay City, he told an estimated 5,000 persons that the Democratic-controlled Congress was holding up programs that might help the area's sagging auto industry.

In the countryside, where navy beans and sugar beets are the principal providers, Mr. Nixon promised to send federal energy chief William E. Simon to try to alleviate local fertilizer shortages.

And in Saginaw, he re-emphasized to a predominantly white audience his

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opposition to school busing and to any interference with local schools.

He greeted Air Force Capt. Robert Abbott of Deckerville, Mich., and said: "for the first time in 12 years we have peace. For the first time in 25 years not one young American is being drafted. Every American is home where he belongs, not in a prison camp in Hanoi."

There were demonstrators at every stop, particularly in Sandusky. They waved placards with such legends as "Impeach the Thief," "Nixon Coddles Criminals," and "Jail the Thief."

In Saginaw, as Mr. Nixon leaned from the top of his

white Buick convertible to shake hands with well-wishers, protesters behind them began shouting "Pay Your Taxes." The car speeded up as it passed the booing section of the crowd.

After the visit, Senate Majority Whip Robert P. Griffin (R-Mich.) said he believed the trip would help Sparling, who is opposed by Democrat J. Robert Traxler. He said it was bound to increase the voter turnout in an area where a heavy turnout would normally favor a Republican.

State Republican Chairman William McLaughlin, who earlier had been dubious about the value of the trip, called it "fabulous—nothing but a plus."

"It's got to help us in the campaign," he said.

Sparling carefully avoided either praise or censure in his remarks.

Before the motorcade began, he told a reporter: "Nixon is not here as a campaigner. He's here to address himself to the issues."

Traxler, a state representative, has said that Mr. Nixon and his record are the only issues in his campaign. He said he believed the Nixon visit helped him.

Mr. Nixon alluded to that when he noted at Cass City that Sparling "is not just against, but for."

The thumb region, named because it sticks up like a thumb from the rest of the state, has been described as so heavily Republican that a Democratic candidate for governor in the 1930's who came from the area could manage only two votes from the 2,000 residents of his home town.

Press Secretary Ronald L. Ziegler said upon Mr. Nixon's return to Washington that the President was "very pleased" with the trip.

"Welcome" signs were visible everywhere and many—printed in red, white and blue—looked identical, indicating they were distributed by organized Nixon supporters. Mr. Nixon frequently stopped to greet well-wishers in the crowd, standing sometimes five deep on the small town sidewalk. His backers shouted words of encouragement.

The President's detractors made their presence felt, too. Occasionally they sought to interrupt his speeches with repeated shouts of "impeach Nixon now."

Critics also waved signs reading "Throw The Bum

Out." Jail To The Chief," Nixon The Traitor," "Impeach With Honor," and "Impeach The Thief."

At one point Mr. Nixon could see two signs within a few feet of each other. One said "Thumbs Down On Nixon" in bright red paint and the other in yellow said "Thumbs Up On Nixon."

Mr. Nixon never identified Traxler by name, but he challenged the attendance record of Sparling's opponent in the state legislature.

Republicans have said Traxler was absent frequently from his post and Nixon said "Sparling isn't going to miss scores and scores of votes when it counts."

The President told audiences along the route that he was working for permanent peace and stressed how he had ended the Vietnam war, ended the military draft, and as recently as last weekend was conferring with world leaders in Paris, where he attended a memorial service for late French President George Pompidou.

The thrust of Mr. Nixon's remarks were in line with his stand that "one year of watergate is enough" and his pleas that the country should turn to other problems and unite behind his leadership.

Mr. Nixon was accompanied by top aides, a speech writer and two White House physicians. His wife did not go along.

The President has a lot riding on the race here. He avoided the blue collar cities of Saginaw and Bay City where organized labor is strongly supporting Traxler. The election may give a reading on Mr. Nixon's ability to help or hinder other Republican candidates in the November congressional elections.



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Nixon appears to be ignoring the many "Impeach Nixon" signs on his arrival to campaign in Saginaw.



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President Nixon and GOP congressional candidate Sparling are greeted by band members at the Tri-Cities Airport.