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Nixon Seeks Safe Audience, And Finds It With the DAR

By William Barry Furlong
Washington Post Staff Writer

In a search of a safe constituency—after his rebuff in the Michigan congressional election—President Nixon visited, and won, the Daughters of the American Revolution yesterday.

Smiling broadly and in an apparently cheerful mood, the President delivered to the DAR an exhortation on the need for patriotism and duty, and a warning that—to exercise world leadership—the United States must be less “inward-looking” and less conscious of its personal comforts if it is to escape the fate of the failed civilizations of ancient Greece and Rome.

Though his remarks were more general than specific, they seven times won the applause of the 3,800-plus delegates to the 83rd Continental Congress of the Daughters of the American Revolution.

The longest burst of applause, some 14 seconds, came on his single venture into any of the specific issues of the day. It was an oblique comment on amnesty for those who fled the nation rather than serve in the armed forces during the Vietnam war.

“At a time when so much attention is directed to those who deserted America,” said Mr. Nixon, “let’s give honor to the 2½ million that served America.”

He was interrupted for applause again a few moments later when he called for a strong military complex that would, he asserted, deter a major war.

Both of these comments touched on issues which the DAR has been considering during its five-day session at Constitution Hall. The group has passed resolutions that reaffirmed its opposition to amnesty for draft evaders, and that expressed a fear that U.S. military spending would not be sufficient to prevent the Soviets from achieving military superiority.

The DAR has, in the past, opposed the U.S. policy of détente both with the Soviet Union and with Red China. These policies were initiated by President Nixon.

Nevertheless, Mr. Nixon was assured of the support that he sought—particularly from the conservative wing as represented by the DAR—when he stepped onstage. In introducing him, Mrs. Donald Spicer of Coronado, California, President General of the DAR, said that her organization wanted only to show him “how firm our support is, how deeply we believe in you, how very much behind you we are.”

Mr. Nixon responded by inviting the delegates not only to view the public rooms of the White House but also his private family quarters and his own Oval office.

“Just don’t take anything that’s nailed down,” he said with a laugh.

The President did not mention Watergate, the House impeachment inquiry, his income tax troubles, his low standings in the polls, or the general political difficulties which have evolved for him out of all this.

Instead he launched into a general discussion of his views of the significance of the American Revolution: that it is a continuing revolution that endures in somewhat different form today, and that it was fought for “all humanity” and not just the “three million people” who lived along the Atlantic coast in the 1700’s.

He linked this with the continuing need for the United States to exercise world leadership in the search for peace. “The peace of the world is in our hands,” he said.

The great challenge of the United States in these times—following U.S. participation in four wars in 55 years—is “to provide the leadership so the next generation can be the first generation in a century that does not have a war.”

He warned that both the purpose and the civilization of a mighty nation is threatened

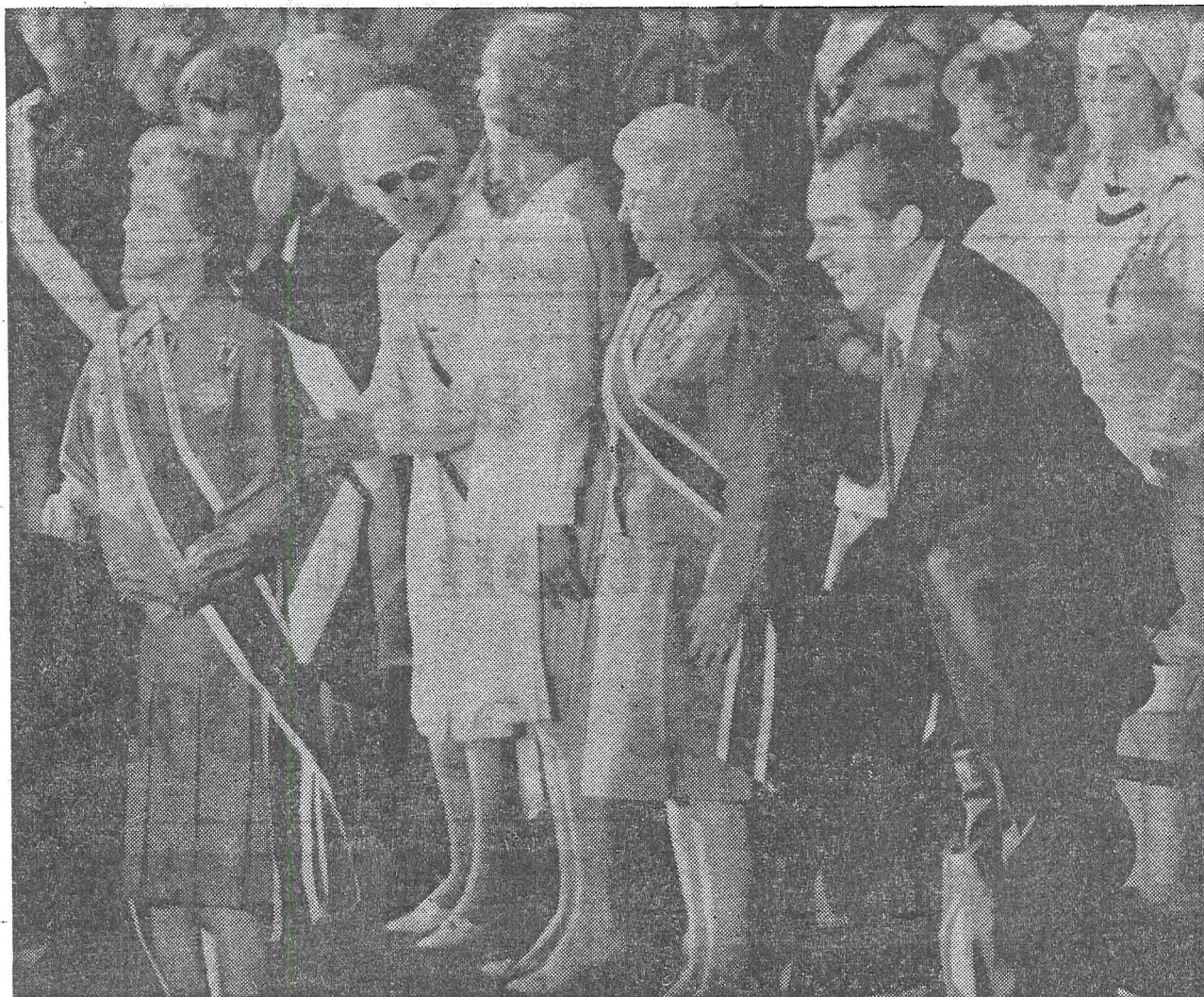
when it becomes more “inward-looking” and preoccupied with riches and comfort than with the noble goals that animated it at its birth.

The meeting of the DAR is scheduled to conclude on Friday. Among the actions taken by the organization were:

- A reaffirmation in its opposition to the Equal Rights Amendment (ER) as representing encroachment on states’ rights.

- Recommended the restoration of the quota system in immigration “to preserve the institutions of American government for our children and posterity.”

- Called for the end to the teaching of “occult and pagan religions”, such as witchcraft and paganism, in public schools.



Associated Press

President Nixon is introduced at the DAR convention by the group's president, Mrs. Donald Spicer, left.