Vixon Warned the Justice Department Against Inquiry on His Watergate Role

By SEYMOUR M. HERSH Special to The New York Times

WASHINGTON, May 1-President Nixon warned the Justice Department last April that any inquiry into his personal in-

By that time John W. Dean 3d, then the White House coun-sel, had begun a series of meet-ings with the original Water-gate prosecuting team. Those conversations eventually be-came the basis for the wide-dimension of the presidency of this. I have got things to do the presidency and I'm not the president and the progress of the watergate of this. I have got things to do

He Convinced Petersen President for a while. He'd love it." Such Step Would Pose Peril to Presidency

inquiry into his personal and volvement in the Watergate cover-up would be "dangerous to the Presidency," the edited of his staff aides—that The gate Watergate." White House transcripts show. New York Times and The Wash-The transcripts disclose that ington Post had learned that the last of 46 edited transcripts by late April Mr. Nixon was Mr. Dean was implicating him that were made available yes-

spread inquiry into Mr. Nixon's for this country and I'm not tion about the unofficial in-activities. going to have — now this is quiries by the Federal prosecu-On April 27, according to the personal. I sometimes fel like

"You've got to believe me,"

Mr. Petersen subsequently assured the President that he had told the prosecutors that "we have to draw the line. We

by late April Mi. Fixed was Mr. Dean was implicating that were made available yes meeting regularly with Henry E. Petersen, an Assistant Attor-prosecutors, headed by Earl J. Watergate case, and won from Watergate case, and won from States Attorney. Mr. Petersen a pledge that "we have no mandate to investigate the President." By that time John W. Dean ad then the White House count in the Dealer of the President. States Attorney. "We've got to head them off at the pass," Mr. Nixon told Mr. Petersen in which the Justice Department official re-peatedly expressed his faith in the innocence of the President. From mid-April on the tran-

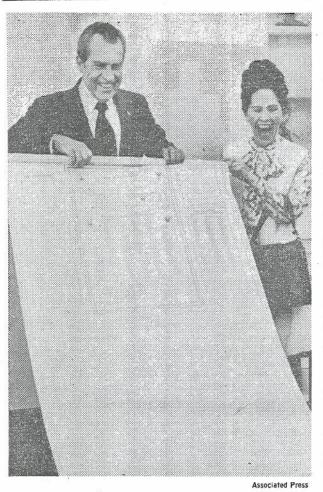
transcript, President Nixon was I'd like to resign. Let Agnew be Continued on Page 40, Column 1

Continued From Page 1, Col. 7 "nothing was approved. I mean you, since March 21st when I

tors. During those weeks, accord-ing to the transcripts, the Pres-"You've g ident was resisting intense the President said a moment said today that Mr. Petersen's

as far as I'm concerned - "as had that conversation with far as I'm concerned turned it Dean, I have broken my ass to get the facts of this case."

Justice Department officials pressure from Mr. Petersen and later. "I am after the truth, role in relaying grand jury and from some White House aides, even if it hurts me."



SUPPORT: President Nixon holding a scroll given to him by Mrs. Francis Finnen of Malibu, Calif. Pasted on the scroll are advertisements supporting Mr. Nixon.

ed that Charles W. Colson, antionary note anyway." other former White House aide, eb told in advance of incrimimade available by the White nating testimony against him. House, give no indication "I do think we owe it to Chuck to at least—so that he doesn't, I mean, go in there and well, scripts explain on what basis frankly, on a perjury rap . . . Mr. Nixon made his decision or do you think that is too dangerous?" he asked. Mr. Ehrlichman agreed to "give him a cau-Ehrlichman and Mr. Haldeman.