

Transcripts Said Not To Hurt

The release of the White House transcripts of Watergate discussions has had virtually no effect on President Nixon's popularity rating with the American public, according to two major public opinion polls issued yesterday.

Public opinion analyst George Gallup reported that a survey made May 10 through 13 showed that 25 per cent of the public approves Mr. Nixon's performance as President, a drop of only one percentage point from April samplings.

Mr. Nixon's job performance rating, Gallup reported, has only fluctuated a point or two in 10 samplings taken since January.

Analyst Louis Harris reported that a scientific sampling taken May 7 through 8 gave Mr. Nixon a 32 per cent positive rating on performance of his job, a 1 point increase over March and April.

The White House transcripts were released on April 30.

The results of both polls seemed to reflect a measure of sympathy from a hard-core minority of the President's supporters, and some success in Mr. Nixon's attempt to carry his Watergate defense to the American people.

Despite that apparent success in stabilizing the ratings, Harris concluded, Mr. Nixon could not now command anything close to a 51 per cent election majority.

But, Harris noted, under the rules of impeachment all Mr. Nixon needs is the support of 34 per cent of the Senate. "Thus, he can afford to lose the support of a majority, and if he retains the crucial minority . . . he will remain in office," the analyst said.

Harris said the key to the President's maintaining a job rating of over 30 per cent positive is his continued high standing with the public on foreign policy matters.

When asked to rate Mr. Nixon's foreign policy performance, 66 per cent of those questioned in May gave a positive reaction. That was an increase of three points over February.

Gallup reported that the May sampling showed for the first time that Mr. Nixon received less than majority approval from all major population groups, including members of his own party.