



Nixon's Chances On the Upgrade

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THE FORTUNES of Richard M. Nixon have had a strong roller-coaster tendency, ever since he entered political life. And now, after a long and fearful downwards swoop, it suddenly seems possible that the roller-coaster may start on an upgrade.

This may hardly seem credible in view of the latest revelation that the Watergate grand jury named the president as an "unindicted co-conspirator". Yet the signs are plain to be seen, for anyone who knows how to read the signs in the Senate and House of Representatives—which is where the signs matter.

First, there is no longer any likelihood of an authoritative group of Republican leaders going to the White House to tell the President he must resign. A fortnight ago this seemed all but certain to happen at an early date—and with Senator Barry Goldwater of Arizona leading the deputation, at that. But now all that has abruptly changed.

Second, it seems much, much less likely that the House Judiciary Committee will recommend the President's impeachment on grounds of criminality by a large bi-partisan majority.

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THERE ARE several reasons for this abrupt change in the former outlook. For one thing, great numbers of Republican members of the House and Senate have begun to hear a sharply changed song from their constituents.

The sharp change was caused by the open talk of the need for the President's

resignation by leading Republicans on Capitol Hill. House minority leader John Rhodes of Arizona, for instance, was one of those who mentioned the dire word. Abruptly, his mail shifted from three to one anti-Nixon to eight to one pro-Nixon.

The plain fact is that all over the country, the remaining Nixon loyalists have suddenly become vocal, angry.

This would count for nothing, to be sure, if it were not for the way the situation has developed within the House Judiciary Committee. With regard to the money from the milk cooperatives, one house member has aptly remarked, "everyone seems to have a lot of milk on his bib." On balance, the unpleasant ITT matter has also gone well for the president.

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IN CONSEQUENCE, Watergate and its ramifications are all that really matters, in the opinion of everyone best qualified to judge both the judiciary committee and the House itself. As to the Watergate evidence thus far put before the judiciary committee, "it's all so damned ambiguous."

The "ambiguities" have led the judiciary committee's Republicans to close ranks on a most vital matter. They have voted unanimously to insist that witnesses be called on Watergate and its ramifications, so that they can be closely cross-questioned by the President's lawyer.

So the committee is likely to hear a lot about several interesting subjects, such as the circumstances of John Dean's plea bargaining. In sum, there may still be some surprises.