

A Mounting Call For Resignation

IT IS NO LONGER POSSIBLE for those who are called upon to judge his performance in office—and that really embraces the whole American public—to disbelieve President Nixon's complicity in the Watergate coverup.

He himself is no longer asking for that disbelief. Coming round the latest turn on the trail of evidence, he has revealed an Oval Office tape made six days after the Watergate burglary which shows him shaping his instructions to his assistant, H. R. Haldeman, in the light of the advantages they would yield "with respect to limiting possible public exposure of involvement by persons connected with the re-election committee."

IT MUST SURELY have been excruciating for the President to be obliged to admit any knowledge of or part in the Watergate coverup after having so long and explicitly denied it, and it has, as he said, damaged his case. We concede him credit for making the facts public now, rather than waiting to have the acknowledgment of them forced from him at the trial of Haldeman, John D. Ehrlichman and John N. Mitchell, where this tape will undoubtedly figure.

Nevertheless, all ten Republicans who had supported him on the House Judiciary Committee votes last week were appalled by the tape's evidence of an obstruction of justice and have announced they will vote for impeachment. This development, coupled with the announcement to the same effect by Minority Leader John Rhodes of Arizona, practically guarantees the overwhelming adoption by the House of the articles being submitted by the committee. Indeed the President takes impeachment as a "foregone conclusion," though all the while resisting the many pleadings and demands that have been made, this time by close friends and supporters, that he resign.

WE TOO SPEAK as a friend of the President to say that the loss of confidence in his authority to lead in public affairs is so deep and so undermining that he should reconsider the refusal to resign that he has so far persisted in.

If the impeachment vote in the House is lopsided, as it now gives every sign of being, his resignation after that vote is taken would spare him and the country a long, agonizing, paralyzing trial in the Senate. It is no doubt a bitter thought, but it is no longer unthinkable.