

Reactions Range From Elation and Relief to Despair

By LAWRENCE VAN GELDER

With emotions ranging from bitter elation and relief to despair, Americans responded yesterday to the news of President Nixon's resignation.

Interviewed in cities large and towns and in widely separated sections of the country on a day of culmination unprecedented in national history, people looked to the turbulent past and to the uncertain future and weighed the question of punishment of the daunted President.

"I'm relieved," said John Watlington, a 63-year-old businessman in Winston-Salem N. C. "I'm glad to see the trauma we have been through finally coming to an end."

Other expressed jubilation; still others sorrow, anger and apprehension.

"I think it's a damned shame, said Julius Stock, a 45-year-old unemployed Boston man. "This country is in bad shape now, and if Nixon resigns, it'll be much worse."

As divided as they were in their reaction to the downfall of the man re-elected to the Presidency so overwhelmingly less than two years ago, so were many people divided on the question of what punishment — if any — he merited.

'Should Be Tried'

"I think Nixon should be tried just like any other citizen," said 41-year-old Bruce Anderson, the owner of a service station in Mocksville, N. C., a rural town of 2,500 people in the state's Piedmont region. "It's just not right for a man, even if he is the President, to break the law and get away with it."

But in Boston, George Dalianis, a 54-year-old retired Government worker, said, "I think they should leave Richard Nixon alone. He's been punished enough."

Robert Eagleston, a 39-year-old Bostonian who is an instructor in an appliance school, said: "He should definitely go to trial and he should definitely go to trial right now. If he's allowed to get out of office without us knowing everything that went on, it would be a big mistake."

"I don't want a trial," said Mrs. Jennie Borun, a retired florist of Yakima, Wash. "He's been a friend, a leader, and should be given amnesty—he has had enough and we've had enough."

In Tucson, Ariz., Duane Reid, a 23-year-old carpenter with a marijuana leaf pattern carved into his belt, commented, "He should go to jail just like me."

Ford Is Assessed

And, looking ahead, people spoke of the future of the country and assessed the qualifications of Vice President Ford.

In Los Angeles, many people expressed concern that Mr. Ford lacked appropriate strength.

"He's kind of a weak man," said Chevy Chase, an actor wearing a Vote For McGovern T-shirt, who emerged from Schwab's Pharmacy and stopped to be interviewed before proceeding to the unemployment office. "Usually, strong candidates have strong opinions."

Next door to the pharmacy, Cliff Collins, who has been shining shoes on the Sunset Strip for 21 years, said of Mr. Ford: "He talks like he might be a pretty nice man, but he backed Nixon until he found the man was guilty. Then he went off and left him. That's not good."

In New Orleans, Dr. Henry Simon, a 48-year-old pediatrician who described himself as a liberal Democrat, said: "I don't think Mr. Ford is a great man, but Mr. Truman wasn't a great man and under him, the country hit new heights. Just as Mr. Nixon tried to lower the office to his level, Mr. Ford will rise to the high level of the office. There's a certain

grandeur of the office that will make small men great."

"I think Ford will be good," said Aileen Jackson, a 40-year-old nurse in Chicago.

"Ford's problem," said Hans Kugler, a 38-year-old professor of chemistry at Roosevelt University in Chicago, "will be to get everything back to normal, and I don't think that will be hard. People will be very happy to do that and get ready to go back to doing what they are supposed to do."

"Ford," said Nellie Hooks, a young secretary in Philadelphia, "will have to pull the nation together and improve the image of the country."

Eighteen-year-old Lorraine Brown of Tucson was among a substantial group of people who said inflation would be Mr. Ford's greatest problem.

"Maybe the economy can get some stability," said 3-year-old Jose Rodriguez-Ema, a recent graduate of Loyola University in New Orleans. "Right now it's going real bad."

"But if we don't get behind Ford we're in big trouble," said Jim Donald, a dairy truck driver from Seattle. "We're in big trouble. Without unity, we don't have much, and that's been our trouble all along. Ford's problem will be his inexperience, and it is going to take us a long time to get squared away."

"The country will move forward, I think," said Daniel Os-manski, a 22-year-old delivery man in Boston. "I think his (Nixon's) resignation will help, because people will look more now at candidates before they vote for them and they'll vote more on issues."

But his fellow Bostonian, Julius Stock, said: "I think the country will fall apart. I'm really afraid that things are going to fall apart."

In Chicago, Robert Morton, a manufacturer's representative, looked hopefully to the future, saying: "I think from now on each party will be very careful with the man they select. This whole thing has made people much more idealistic in their Presidential nominations. They will judge politicians on their character, morality, honesty and integrity."

Sees No Major Change

However, in Phoenix, Ariz., Hazel Bell, who works with her husband of 41 years in a sheet-metal manufacturing business, was not so sanguine.

"There are still all those ambitious young men who'll do anything," she said. "There's a kind of moral bankruptcy in the country."

And in Tucson, Randy Hold-ridge, a 27-year-old businessman, said, "Since I don't think

there will be any major change in the Government, which has been inept and reactionary, I don't think there'll be any great leap forward, but I think that people will feel better about the Government, not because it's any better but because Nixon's gone."

And some people put the matter in historical perspective.

"Well," said Catherine Stewart, a 47-year-old Boston bookkeeper, "we've gone from assassinations to other things, so this will work out, too. I'm pretty sure of that."

"Nixon's resignation won't hurt us any," said T. W. Ildstad, a sixtyish logger and civil engineer from Enumclaw, Wash. "The country is bigger than Nixon."

"I'm an extremely optimistic American," said Mrs. Charles Farris Jr., 44, co-owner of a needlepoint shop, wife of a doctor and co-chairman of Mr. Nixon's 1968 campaign in Louisiana. "I'm thinking of something my 12-year-old said to me this morning. He said, 'You know, if we lived in South America, there'd be a war in the streets—and look at this—nothing is happening.'"

"We live in a great country," said Noah Genter, a butcher in Jenkintown, Pa. "I Xhave a lot of faith in this country. We can do it."

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