

Nixon Pardon Stirs Outcry Against Ford

By Carroll Kilpatrick
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President Ford's honeymoon came to an abrupt, if possibly temporary, end yesterday in the wake of his pardon Sunday of former President Nixon.

There was gloom and seeming disarray in the White House as an avalanche of criticism hit an unsuspecting staff and President.

In Pittsburgh yesterday morning where Mr. Ford addressed a meeting on urban transit, he encountered the first boos of his month-old administration.

En route back to Washington, as if to emphasize the shock the criticism was causing, a spokesman announced that the President had postponed "indefinitely" the decision promised for today on conditional amnesty for Vietnam war deserters and draft dodgers.

In the Pittsburgh speech, the President avoided all reference to his decision on pardon, but demonstrators outside the hotel where he spoke shouted their disapproval, booed and carried placards criticizing the decision.

En route back to the Pittsburgh airport, however, Mr. Ford stopped at a cluster of schools where he was cheered warmly and where one adult, reaching out to shake hands, said, "you did the right thing." The President was grimaced when he got off his plane at the Pittsburgh airport after the short flight from Washington.

But he plunged into the small, friendly crowd on hand to welcome him and shook hands with scores of well-wishers before driving to the Pittsburgh Hilton Hotel to address the sixth International Conference on Urban Transportation, where he declared his opposition to having the federal government play a major role in subsidizing mass transportation.

However, he said he would support "some limited federal operating assistance" to the cities, a major goal of big-city mayors with transportation systems operating in the red.

That promise brought the only interruption as Mr. Ford read his prepared speech. However, he was warmly applauded when he entered the

hall and when he concluded his speech.

Deputy press secretary John Hushen, who took over as acting press secretary following the sudden resignation Sunday of J. F. terHorst in protest against the Nixon pardon, said that "the events of the past week, especially of the last 72 hours, have not allowed the President to focus on the question of the conditional amnesty program."

Hushen said the President had not finished his consideration of the proposals he has under study.

"It is more complex than he thought initially and he wants to be personally involved in the entire matter," Hushen

said in announcing the indefinite postponement of the amnesty announcement.

Asked if the pardon for the former President was regarded as more urgent than the question of amnesty, Hushen said, "That's a conclusion you can draw because one [event] followed the other."

The President has made no change in his previously announced case-by-case, category-by-category approach to amnesty, Hushen said.

Asked if there might be unconditional amnesty in line with the full pardon of the former President, the spokesman replied, "No."

Hushen said the President was aware of public reaction to his pardon announcement and that one White House switchboard operator told Mr. Ford Sunday night that the response was "very heavy and kind of unfavorable."

According to the first count, there were 3,000 phone calls,

2-to-1 against the President's decision, Hushen said.

"He knew it would be controversial," the deputy press secretary said.

When the President landed at Pittsburgh airport there were no demonstrations against him. But when his motorcade reached the hotel where he spoke there were critical placards and shouts of "justice died."

The booing came as he left the hotel, and there were more persons on hand than when he arrived.

None of the placards supported the presidential decision. "Welcome to Pittsburgh, the Honeymoon is Over," one placard said.

Others said, "Ford's Pardon Defies Justice," "Does Ford Know the Meaning of Justice?" and "There Is No Justice."

Mr. Ford's speech was a disappointment to many city officials who had hoped he would promise greater federal assistance to mass transit.

He said that the House-passed mass transit bill, which authorizes federal spending of \$11 billion over six years, must be "an absolute upper-limit dollar amount."

Amendments pending in the Senate would sharply increase the spending limit and allow greater use of federal funds for operating expenses.

Mr. Ford recalled his opposition to the paying of operating subsidies out of the Highway Trust Fund for mass transit and said such a program "would lead the federal government into local transit operating matters."

That would not result in better or more service but "in greater costs and less efficiency," he said.

The federal government's role in urban planning and transit technology development must be carried out "in complete and total partnership with states and localities," Mr. Ford said.

"We will help with urban planning and with transit technology development," he said. "Yet, it should be clearly understood that the chief objective of Department of Transportation grant programs is to help cities solve their transportation problems. It is not to restructure and rebuild cities."

Federal assistance must be viewed as secondary aid because "federal taxpayers just can't afford to pay for the whole package," the President said. "I won't ask them to do so."

"Washington has to help with funding," he added, "but that funding simply must have realistic restraints."

The President said he was

"determined" that in achieving the nation's transportation goals "we do so without further feeding the fires of inflation by busting the federal budget."