

PARDON PRAISED BY ROCKEFELLER

Step by Ford Termed 'Act of
Compassion and Courage'
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By LINDA CHARLTON

Nelson A. Rockefeller, who said last week that he believed former President Richard M. Nixon should be treated like any other citizen, said yesterday that President Ford's pardon of the former President was "an act of conscience, compassion and courage."

The Vice President-designate, asked to reconcile his statements of last week, in which he also said that he thought the decision about prosecution of Mr. Nixon should be made by Leon Jaworski, the Watergate special prosecutor replied, unsmiling: "I've made my statement."

Mr. Rockefeller, who spent the day at his West 55th Street offices at a meeting of his national Commission on Critical Choices for Americans, conceded that Mr. Ford's action would be "undoubtedly controversial in the short run," but said that "in the long run it will speed the healing of our nation."

He refused to comment on the possibility that the President's act, by intensifying Congressional partisanship, might make his own confirmation hearings more protracted and more heated. "Well, I have not the ability to anticipate that question," he said. "Time alone will tell."

Mr. Rockefeller, shortly after his resignation late last month, said that his views concerning Mr. Nixon paralleled those of the Senate minority leader, Hugh Scott of Pennsylvania. He paraphrased Mr. Scott saying that Mr. Nixon had already been hanged, and should not be "drawn and quartered." He said that he thought this position faithfully echoed the mood of the country.

At a news conference early last week, Mr. Rockefeller maintained this stand, but said in response to questions that Mr. Nixon should not be treated any differently from any other citizen, and that Mr. Jaworski should make the decision about prosecution.

He is scheduled to substitute for President Ford at a dinner given by the Religious Zionists of America on Thursday. But he has canceled political appearances, scheduled before he was nominated by Mr. Ford, in Oklahoma, Illinois and Kentucky, within the next two weeks. And he also said today that he would do no campaigning until he is confirmed, not even for Governor Wilson. The hearings are expected to begin sometime next week.