

San Clemente and Key Biscayne, though no longer the Western and Florida extensions of the White House, are still being maintained at a cost inappropriate for any former chief executive in a democratic nation, not to mention one who resigned under a cloud. As private residences of Richard Nixon, their extravagant staffing at public expense is at once ludicrous and offensive.

Senator Joseph M. Montoya, as chairman of the appropriations subcommittee that has examined the Federal outlays for Mr. Nixon, discloses that the Government's annual payments for personnel and support services at Mr. Nixon's disposal amount to nearly \$2 million. That figure does not include the special "transitional allowance" for the former President for which President Ford had originally requested \$850,000 but which Congress is expected to trim to \$200,000.

The annual cost of Secret Service protection for Mr. Nixon and his two residences currently amounts to \$1,122,000. Some \$800,000 in salaries for the maintenance of the two households is being absorbed by the White House, the Defense Department, the General Services Administration and other Government agencies.

Senator Montoya reports that, of a Nixon retinue of 64, eleven are still on the White House payroll and 14 others are drawing \$116,880 while on assignment from the White House communications network. Seven G.S.A. employes are doing "custodial work" at San Clemente, in addition to ten others who are dealing with the Nixon papers in Washington.

The premature unconditional pardon granted Richard Nixon represented an affront to justice. Maintaining Mr. Nixon in a style suggestive of the view that he is still a partner in the honors and even the operations of the Presidency is an affront to propriety.

...and a Different One

The view from George Washington's home in Mount Vernon is almost unspoiled. It is that way because of the efforts of a large number of people, most notably the Mount Vernon Ladies Association, to maintain for the million Americans who visit the estate each year a vista across the Potomac faithful to that which the Washingtons saw when they lived there nearly two centuries ago.

Substantial philanthropic efforts have been made to purchase park land on the Maryland side of the river for future public acquisition and for the granting of scenic easements over portions of the landscape. What was needed finally to stave off the developers and a high-rise apartment, an amusement park and a sewage treatment plant was Congressional authorization to purchase the remainder of the land outright. Such a bill passed both houses of Congress overwhelmingly, but President Ford reportedly is being advised by the Office of Management and Budget to veto it on the ground that the \$4.6 million expenditure would be inflationary.

On the contrary, the preservation of this national treasure is well worth the price, as Congress made clear. It is hard to believe that President Ford will fail to follow Congress' direction to preserve this bit of the American heritage for the living and all future generations of Americans.