

Nixon's Discussion of the Press Marked by Tension

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HOUSTON, March 19—
convention of the National
society of Broadcasters, Pres-
ident Nixon suggested at
point in his question-and-
answer session tonight, was
the best place for him to
discuss the press.

Then he proceeded to re-
turn to the subject again and a
during the one-hour, nation-
wide televised session. Mr. Ni-
xon sounded less acerbic than
often has, but the tension
has characterized his press
relations throughout his
career showed through.

Why, the President was asked,
had he not been more accessi-
ble in the past? Mr. Nixon re-
plied that sometimes news con-
ferences were not useful for
from a President's point of
view, but he expected to be
more in the future.

Then another question
harking back to Mr. Nixon's
farewell declaration in 1969
that the press would no longer
have him "to kick around,"
asked how the President
answered, "I left my Yo-yo in
these days. After a few
months about the "adversary
relationship" between Presi-
dent and the press, Mr. Nixon

his jaw and said with what
seemed to be heavy irony:
"The President should treat
the press just as fairly as
press treats him."

A few moments later, he
looked back at it. Maybe one of
the reasons that 80 per cent of
American people believe
the country is already in a re-
cession, he said, is that about
80 per cent of them watch tele-
vision news or listen to radio
news.

Then, suddenly, for reasons
that none of his aides could
immediately explain, Mr. Ni-
xon bridled at what seemed an
innocuous question — again
a question dealing with his
accessibility to the public.

A reporter from Nashville
where Mr. Nixon on Saturday
night played the piano and
twirled a Yo-yo during the
opening of the new Grand Ole
Opry House, asked whether the
President intended to show
this "other" (presumably, more
human) side of his personality
in the future.

The President glared at him,
asked how the President
answered, "I left my Yo-yo in
Nashville," and turned with a
scowl to the next questioner.
Asked by still another ques-
tioner to cite examples of the

"vicious" and "slanderous" at the end with Dan Rather of
television reporting he complained the Columbia Broadcasting Sys-
of some months ago, Mr. Nixon seemed to fluster him, and
said that he understood he blinked his eyes and licked
reporters won Pulitzer Prize his lips nervously.

not "by being for" things. Mr. Rather has several times
"by being against" them. in the past been the target of
mentioned no specific cases: news-conference barbs from Mr.
reporting that had offended Nixon and from Ronald L. Zieg-
ler, the Presidential press secre-

"I am not going to be diverted
by any press criticism—ask a question about Watergate,
or unfair—from doing the identifying himself as he began,
I was elected to do," he acknowledged with a few
boos rang through the large
Mr. Nixon seemed calm and
chance.

He was a bit embarrassed. "Are you running for some-
thing?" Mr. Nixon asked him.
denunciation of the press "No sir, Mr. President," re-
called to him, but he recovered quickly. However, an exchange
"Are you?"

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