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PAGE A-4

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Enough Said, Seen, Heard

When the clamor went up several weeks ago demanding that President Nixon quit, this was opposed wholeheartedly on grounds that all the evidence was not in, that a full exercising of the impeachment procedure as provided for in the Constitution was the only way Americans and the rest of the world would ever know the whole story behind Watergate and its hydraheaded scandal.

The picture has changed.

The American people have seen and heard enough.

Watergate is a tired re-run. President Nixon has by his own words on the so-called Watergate cover-up admitted his knowledge of the act which the House Judiciary Committee has labeled obstruction of justice.

Referring to his failure to turn over evidence, the President said his withholding Watergate evidence from Congress was "a serious act of omission for which I take full responsibility and which I deeply regret." He revealed much more.

Impeachment now seems only a matter of the nation's suffering through the inevitable to the inevitable, all of which would serve no useful purpose except the final skewering of Mr. Nixon in a public sacrificial mass, a modern hecatomb.

President Nixon has lost any semblance of effectiveness as the chief executive of the most powerful nation in the world. His ability to function is in serious question.

His ship of state is being abandoned by once loyal and brave supporters, most of whom are asking for his resignation or, failing to get that, impeachment.

These include men — Republicans — who stood firmly by

the President in the glare of public television in the recent House hearings — Rep. Charles Wiggins (R-Cal.) who led Mr. Nixon's defense, Rep. Charles W. Sandman Jr. (R-N.J.); Rep. Edward Hutchinson (R-Mich.); Rep. Wylie Mayne (R-Iowa); Henry P. Smith II (R-N.Y.); also House GOP minority leader John J. Rhodes of Ariz., Robert P. Griffin (R-Mich.), Senate Republican whip, and Vice President Gerald R. Ford who has switched from a position of vocal support to one of silence.

There is little question that the nation and the foundations of this Republic can withstand Mr. Nixon's impeachment and even Senate conviction. That was ably demonstrated during the recent impeachment hearings in the House Judiciary Committee when the nation did not crumble but grew immensely stronger.

With impeachment sentiment mounting nation-wide, with Mr. Nixon standing to lose much more than just his "place in history" (and his valiant efforts toward peace and international understanding can never be erased), the man on the street who had been pulling for the President now sees the alternatives as either resignation or impeachment.

Resignation — with immunity from prosecution, if he could win this one generosity from the Congress — would seem "at this point in time" a fitting end to "The Watergate Era" that has brought the nation to a virtual standstill in the midst of a critical inflationary period.

But will Mr. Nixon resign? He says he won't. But it seems he owes this much to his Country, to his Party, and to himself and to his family.

