

Of Perquisites and Punishment *NYT 9/9/74*

To the Editor:

It was with a feeling of shock, coupled with disbelief, that I read of President Ford's request that Congress grant former President Richard M. Nixon almost a million dollars in expenses as "... fixed by law in the Presidential Transition Act of 1963."

The fact of the matter is that Mr. Nixon resigned only because if he hadn't, the House of Representatives would have voted articles of impeachment; and, as his closest colleagues in Congress affirmed, conviction in the upper chamber was a dead certainty. Therefore, the burning question is not whether Nixon should receive additional welfare at the taxpayers' expense, but rather if he is even entitled to the \$60,000 annual pension granted to former Presidents. Impeached Presidents are denied this stipend. And, in Mr. Nixon's case, he simply fled before Congress could vote. To all intents and purposes, impeachment forced him out of the White House.

Perhaps the best way to resolve this dilemma is to urge our Special Prosecutor, Leon Jaworski, to pursue his investigation. Mr. Nixon can then receive his day in court. If he is acquitted, no one will protest any monies granted him. If he is convicted, the reverse is obvious.

Until such time as the full extent of Mr. Nixon's participation in the affair known as "Watergate" is made clear to his fellow Americans, neither pardons nor payments are in order.

YVONNE S. ARCHER
Nantucket, Mass., Aug., 31, 1974

To the Editor:

I keep reading letters on your page demanding ex-President Nixon be brought into a common court of justice and tried just like any other lawbreaker. They say the ex-President's case cannot be considered closed until this is done—a jury trial and a judge passing sentence. They say the law of the land is applicable to all.

Hasn't Mr. Nixon already been tried, by the House Judiciary Committee? Doesn't their unanimous verdict—guilty on three counts have any standing in the halls of justice? Some sadistically inclined may retort they had no power to pass sentence. But was not this act a strong factor in forcing Mr. Nixon's resignation? And was not his resignation sufficient punishment?

Suppose Mr. Jaworski decides to try Mr. Nixon as a common criminal, can any jury convict or any judge pass sentence upon a man whose crimes were committed when he was President of the United States? Is not such trial and sentence the prerogative of the United States Senate alone?

No one in the world could fall further than Mr. Nixon has fallen. To me that should be enough punishment to satisfy all these legalists. It is a claim open to some dispute, for these legal experts to present our legal system as always and to all men an equal dispenser of justice.

I say let the man alone. Not out of compassion, but out of justice.

VINCENT L. BENNETT
Manchester Center, Vt., Sept. 2, 1974