

Editor's Report

Thoughts While Reading

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NEW YORK — This has been a three-story week. Each of the top stories — the price freeze, the new Vietnam agreement and (what else?) Watergate — calls for its own special comment, and that's what follows.

Taking the stories up in the order given, for no special reason, I find that my jotted notes on President Nixon's price freeze are hardly voluminous. The very excellent reason is that literally nobody can say for sure whether this inflation medicine is the right prescription or not.

As usual, the long-winded supposed experts on economics are divided every which way in their guesswork. Some say the selective freeze is unenforceable and unfair and will do more harm than good. Others say it is a case of too little remedy,

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The third major story of this and many past weeks — Watergate — is going to get no detailed rundown here. My personal rule of thumb in the scandal is to withhold most comment until the guilt or innocence of those accused has been proven in court, and that rule is still being followed.

All I want to convey here today is a feeling I have in my bones about the way the Ervin Senate committee hearings are being conducted — a feeling that a great many Americans are getting sick both of the excessive publicity and the circus procedures, which can smear the innocent and protect the guilty.

There is an unhealthy air about these hearings. You begin to get the idea that they are not hearings at all, but actually amount to a prosecution or, even worse, a persecution.

The suspicion grows that the inquisitors are not really out to get the facts, but out to get the President of the United States.

If this keeps up in the same vein much longer, you are likely to see a tidal wave of public disgust.

It will be no more than the committee deserves.