

Rodino Is Hot Property On the Lecture Circuit

By Miles Benson

To his own surprise, Chairman Peter W. Rodino Jr. of the House Judiciary Committee is suddenly a hot property on both the political and non political lecture circuits.

The 64-year-old Democrat from Newark, N.J., spent 25 years as one of the lesser-known personalities of the House until the Nixon impeachment inquiry and television thrust him into national prominence.

Now speaking invitations from across the country cascade into his office. Candidates for governor and U.S. senator seek his endorsement. South Dakota farmers and New Mexico Democrats offer their hospitality. Book publishers pursue him. Two lecture bureaus want to sign him up.

"We don't understand what kind of impression he made on people, but apparently it was favorable," says Francis O'Brien, Rodino's administrative assistant. "We've had 100 invitations in the last couple of weeks."

Rodino, who accepted no speaking invitations outside of Newark during the impeachment inquiry, is now

easing himself into the national speaking circuit.

He will fly to Albuquerque, Sept. 13 to keynote the New Mexico state Democratic convention, and to Madison, S.D., the next day to address the East River Electric Power Cooperative and boost the re-election campaign of Democratic Rep. Frank E. Denholm.

Swings this fall through Pennsylvania, Michigan, Iowa, California, Kansas, Colorado and Arizona, on behalf of House and Senate Candidates, also are under consideration, O'Brien said.

On Oct. 12, Rodino will serve as grand marshal of the Columbus Day parade in Chicago.

Three book publishers have made overtures to Rodino for his inside story of the impeachment inquiry. All three got rejection slips, although Rodino plans to write some "serious articles" for law journals.

Although some members of Congress are able to double their congressional salaries with fees from organized speaking tours, Rodino has spurned inquiries from two New York lecture bureaus.