

Congress Presses Drive For Outside Prosecutor

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WASHINGTON, May 1 — Congress, prodded by Republican members, pressed today for the appointment of an independent prosecutor to take charge of the Nixon Administration's Watergate investigation.

The Senate adopted a resolution, drafted by Charles H. Percy, Republican of Illinois, urging President Nixon to seek Senate confirmation of a nominee "of the highest character and integrity from outside the executive branch to serve as special prosecutor."

Only four Senators were present for the midday voice vote. Senator Carl T. Curtis, Republican of Nebraska, sought tonight to force a reconsideration of the action.

But Mr. Curtis made it clear that his purpose was to try to amend the resolution to permit a former Republican Senator, John J. Williams of Delaware,

who is not a lawyer, to head such an investigation.

Eighteen Republicans in the House of Representatives, including two of the party leaders, introduced a similar resolution calling on Elliot L. Richardson, the Attorney General-designate, to "immediately" use the authority that Mr. Nixon gave him yesterday to appoint an impartial prosecutor.

The Republican moves reflected widespread skepticism on Capitol Hill that the initiatives Mr. Nixon took yesterday—shaking up his Administration's hierarchy and pledging to the nation that "Justice will be pursued, fully and fairly"—would suffice to restore public confidence in the integrity of the Government.

The Democratic chairman of the House Judiciary Committee, Peter W. Rodino Jr. of New

Continued on Page 31, Column 3

A Tactical Magnanimity

But there appeared to be, at least in part, a tactical magnanimity among the Democrats. Mr. Mansfield said that he was "very proud of the way the Democrats have conducted themselves."

"They've let the facts and allegations speak for themselves," he said.

Furthermore, as the House Democratic leader, Thomas P. O'Neill Jr., said, "The Republicans are doing all the testifying against themselves, and we should let it be."

Senator Percy declared on the Senate floor that he had delayed introducing his resolu-

tion calling for an impartial prosecutor until he heard Mr. Nixon's address last night.

The President said that he had given Mr. Richardson authority to appoint such a supervising investigator if Mr. Richardson thought it appropriate.

"Now that the President has spoken," Mr. Percy said today, "I remain convinced that the introduction of this resolution is appropriate. A simple and very basic question is at issue: Should the executive branch investigate itself? I do not think so."

Several senior members of the Senate had previously added their names as co-sponsors, however. Among the 10 Republicans and four Democrats were Barry Goldwater, Republican of Arizona, and both Senators from New York, Jacob K. Javits, a Republican, and James L. Buckley, a Conservative-Republican.

The House resolution was introduced by Representatives John B. Anderson of Illinois, the chairman of the House Republican Conference; Robert H. Michel of Illinois, the chairman of the Republican Congressional Campaign Committee, and 16 of their Republican colleagues.

Mr. Anderson declared sup-

TEXT OF RESOLUTION

Following is the text of the Senate's resolution:

Resolved that it is the sense of the Senate that:

1. The President immediately designate an individual

of the highest character and integrity from outside the executive branch to serve as special prosecutor for the Government of the United States in any and all criminal investigations, indictments and actions arising from any illegal activity by any persons, acting individually or in combination with others, in the Presidential election of 1972 or any campaign, canvass or other activity related to it;

2. The President should grant such special prosecutor all authority necessary and proper to the effective performance of his duties, and

3. The President should submit the name of such designee to the Senate, requesting a resolution of approval thereof.

port of Mr. Nixon's "expressed determination to bring every fact of this sorry affair into the open," but he said that it was crucial to convince the public "that nothing remains hidden."

Accordingly, Mr. Anderson said, "the best way to accomplish this is through the appointment of an independent special prosecutor, as the President suggested in his statement last night."

A number of Senators endorsed the suggestion that former Senator John J. Williams, a Delaware Republican with a reputation as a diligent investigator and unimpeachable public servant, be named to head the Government's case.

The Washington Post commented editorially today that the President's actions "leave a lot yet to be done" and protested that "it is as if he were continuing to probe to find that level of public tolerance which would oblige him to concede the least."

An editorial in The Chicago Sun-Times said that the President's action had not been "commensurate with the magnitude" of the Watergate disclosures.

The New York Times said, that the President had done "all that was inevitable—but not all that was necessary."

Continued From Page 1, Col. 7

Jersey, said that he would seek legislation to enable Congress to remove entirely from the Presidency the responsibility for investigating the Watergate case.

Representative John E. Moss, Democrat of California, said that neither the President's actions nor the judgment of House leaders that he was acting "prematurely" would deter him from seeking a formal House inquiry into the possibility of lodging impeachment proceedings against the President.

Democratic leaders of Congress were, for the most part, inclined to support Mr. Nixon and accept his guarantee there would be "no whitewash at the White House."

Mike Mansfield, the Senate Democratic leader, said that before Mr. Nixon's actions yesterday "the American system was being undermined" but that "the undermining has now been stopped."

"Now the foundation can be rebuilt, perhaps stronger," he said.

The Democratic Speaker of the House, Carl Albert, told newsmen that he could not support the impeachment inquiry because "it would not be proper at this time."

"It touches on a question that, for the sake of this country, we shouldn't get into at this time," he said.



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Senator Charles H. Percy, Republican of Illinois, sponsored a resolution, which was adopted by the Senate, calling for a special investigator in the Watergate case.

Only 4 Senators Present

He said that he agreed with Mr. Nixon that it was time to turn from preoccupation with the Watergate case and "get on with the important task of governing." But, he added, "Let us remember that we cannot govern unless we have the support of the people."

Only three other Senators were present when Mr. Percy's resolution was adopted unanimously by voice vote. They were Robert C. Byrd of West Virginia, the Democratic whip; John Sparkman, Democrat of Alabama, and Pete V. Domenici, Republican of New Mexico.