

Speculation On Nixon Impeaching

Washington

The chairman of the House Judiciary Committee said yesterday that if the nation's criminal justice system does not protect Vice President Spiro T. Agnew's rights, it might be an "impeachable matter" against President Nixon.

Representative Peter W. Rodino (Dem-N.J.) whose committee has the power to initiate impeachment proceedings, also said that Agnew should trust the courts instead of asking Congress to prove his guilt or innocence.

Rodino was interviewed on CBS' Face the Nation.

Agnew, in a televised speech in Los Angeles Saturday, criticized the Justice department's investigation of him in connection with an alleged scheme of political kickbacks in Maryland and said he would not resign if indicted.

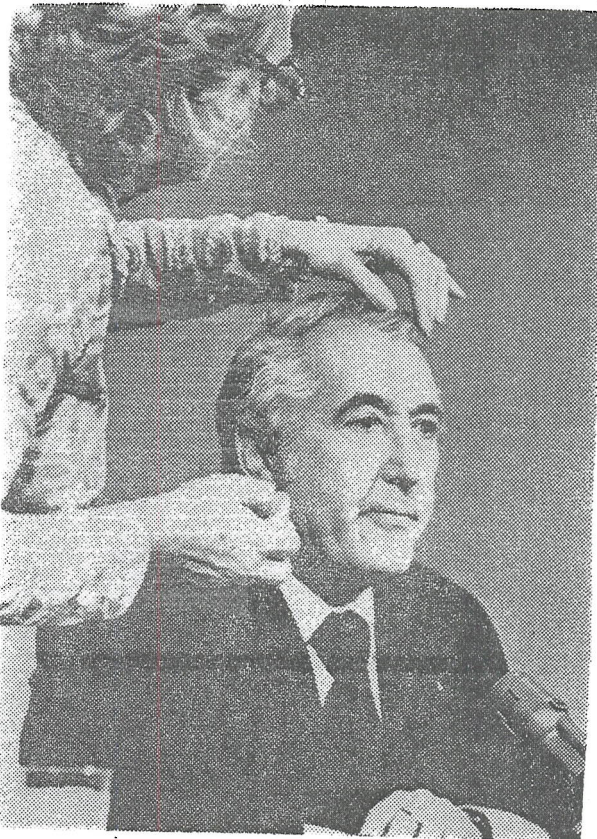
He said news leaks from the Justice department were damaging him and his defense.

LEAKS

"If the charges are true that there are leaks and that this is prejudicing the vice president, then the President of the United States has the authority and the right to do something about it," Rodino said.

"And, as a matter of fact, I think as the principal in the matter, that if he were not to do this, then I think that this is a question as to whether or not a serious matter such as this, a neglect of office and omission to do the proper thing, might not be an impeachable matter."

Rodino later was asked directly: "You are proposing, as I understand you, that if



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Facing Up

Representative Peter Rodino (Dem-N.J.) got a last minute touch up in Washington yesterday before his appearance on CBS television's 'Face the Nation' where he discussed the possible impeachment of President Nixon. Rodino is chairman of the House Judiciary Committee.

Mr. Nixon does not investigate the charges by the vice president. . . it is possible that you should impeach the President. Do I understand you correctly?"

REPLIED

"Well," Rodino replied, "I am stating that the constitution does provide that this is his responsibility and that this could be viewed as such."

Rodino agreed with other congressional leaders that

congress should not investigate the Agnew case unless the courts have made a determination.

"I would hope to think that the vice president would have enough confidence in our system of justice, that he would deal with the American public, and those who are administering our justice system would presume him innocent until proven otherwise," Rodino said.

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