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Inquiry into a Nixon crowd?

President Nixon called it the work of "an unruly mob that represents the worst in America."

Former Senator George Murphy said, "The crowd was wild-eyed and all steamed up. They would have torn us to pieces without knowing what they were

doing."

San Jose Police Chief Ray Blackmore said the reports of violence were exaggerated. "A few rocks were thrown. There was a verbal attack. That was the so-called violence," he said.

Those were some of the immediate responses back

in October 1970 when Nixon, stumping for the unsuccessful re-election campaign of Murphy, met up with a crowd of demonstrators outside the San Jose Civic Auditorium.

What really happened in San Jose that night was — and remains — unclear.

But as the staggering tales of Watergate have unfolded, they have revived critics' contention that the San Jose incident was deliberately staged and exaggerated to invoke sympathy for the President and his candidates.

Two weeks ago Special Watergate Prosecutor Archi-

bald Cox's office said Cox was considering looking into the affair.

Since then, San Jose officials have been reviewing various versions of the incident, some of which continue to conflict.

For example, San Jose Police Detective Chief Bar-

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ton L. Collins says he had warned his superiors a month ahead of time that radicals were planning violent action and Republicans could not have been responsible.

But other investigators

such as former Santa Clara University Prof. Peter Stern argue that Murray Chotiner, working as a campaign aide to Murphy, made the decision to hold a San Jose appearance less than two weeks before the rally.

As yet, no Cox investigator has shown up in San Jose, but Assistant District Attorney William Hoffman, who investigated immediately after the incident, doubts that anything will come of a new inquiry.