

NYTimes
The Proper Investigator: Representative Rodino

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To the Editor:

The current controversy about the appointment of a special prosecutor for the Watergate and related cases seems totally unnecessary. The Constitution and the laws provide for the proper investigator, the chairman of the House Judiciary Committee, a post presently held by Representative Peter W. Rodino of New Jersey. It is his duty to find out whether the President has committed any impeachable offenses and, if so, to bring in a resolution of impeachment in the House. In conducting his investigation, he has full powers to call for persons and papers. Noncompliance with the committee's subpoenae would merely strengthen the case for impeachment, should one develop.

The precedent for his procedure is the House Judiciary Committee investigation of President Andrew Johnson in 1867. Representative James F. Wilson, an Iowa Republican, was the chairman of the committee, which conducted the inquiry after the failure of an attempt to refer the matter to a select committee. In December 1867, by a split vote with the chairman in the minority, the committee reported in favor of impeachment. The House, however, upheld the

minority position and defeated the impeachment resolution. Only after the President renewed the controversy by dismissing the Secretary of War while the Senate was in session (February 1868) was he finally impeached by a unanimous party vote.

It would therefore seem obvious that the investigation currently being conducted by Mr. Rodino ought to be the principal effort to ferret out the facts now beclouding the Presidency.

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