

Rocky Sidesteps Issue Of Nixon Impeachment

Washington

Governor Nelson A. Rockefeller said yesterday it is up to Congress to determine whether the Watergate disclosures make President Nixon unfit to hold office.

He declined to give any personal opinion, saying "I don't have the facts."

"The degree to which this man should be judged is a delicate thing" he said on NBC's "Meet the Press." "Congress has got to determine whether the things you've been talking about (Watergate) unfit him."

At another point in the questioning, Rockefeller, who retires as governor of New York today in what many political observers consider a start toward campaigning for the 1976 Republican presidential nomination, said: "They've got to decide whether he should be impeached."

The question Congress must answer, Rockefeller said, is "was he responsible or was he not; and if he was, was he responsible in such a way as to be disqualified from office?"

The governor, who opposed Mr. Nixon for the Republican nomination in 1968, criticized the President for not telling a meeting of Republican governors November 20 that 18 minutes of a key White House tape had been erased.

Instead Mr. Nixon told the governors not to expect any sensational new disclosures just a few days before news of the erasure became public.

"He was on a mission of candor — however it's called," Rockefeller said. "That would have been a convenient thing to have included."

The governor commented,

"the tragedy for me and the rest of the country is we don't know if all the disclosures have been made."

Asked if he thought there would or should be any further disclosures in the Watergate affair, Rockefeller replied: "I don't know what's going on, so how do I know if there should be more disclosures?"

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