

Doar a Prospect for Impeachment Job

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Special to The New York Times

WASHINGTON, Dec. 16—

John M. Doar, who led the Government's drive against racial discrimination in the nineteen-sixties, is a leading candidate to direct the Congressional inquiry into President Nixon's conduct in office.

Authoritative officials said today that Representative Peter W. Rodino Jr. of New Jersey, the Democratic chairman of the House Judiciary Committee, had narrowed his search for a special counsel on impeachment to five or six lawyers, among whom Mr. Doar was described as the "hottest" prospect.

The sources cautioned, however, that Mr. Rodino would not make a final decision on the key appointment until later this week and that he wanted to "weigh the strengths of one possibility against each of the others."

The identities of those still under active consideration—chosen from a list that totaled more than 100 a month ago—could not be determined today. But they were said to include Frederick B. Lacey Jr., a Federal judge in Newark, William T. Gossett, a Detroit corporation lawyer and former president of the American Bar Association, and Robert E. Keeton, a professor of law at Harvard University.

The special counsel will play a central role in the Judiciary Committee's efforts to determine if grounds exist under the Constitution to recommend that the House of Representatives impeach President Nixon. The counsel will head a special staff of 31 lawyers and investigators already gathering material relating to allegations of misconduct by the President.

Associates said that Mr. Rodino was looking for a lawyer with unquestioned integrity who, as one of the Congressman's colleagues put it, "is well known in legal circles and not seeking a national or political reputation out of this."

Mr. Doar resigned Friday after six years as director of the Bedford-Stuyvesant Development and Services Corporation, the Brooklyn community organization formed by the late Senator Robert F. Kennedy. He said he had no specific plans.

Mr. Doar, who is 52 years old, is a former president of the New York Board of Education. He is best known within the legal profession as the Assistant Attorney General for Civil Rights from 1961 to 1967, a period of concentrated desegregation efforts by the Kennedy and Johnson Administrations.

Qualifications for Job

The sources said that Mr. Rodino, who has persistently declared his intention to conduct the impeachment inquiry on bipartisan basis but encountered considerable skepticism among Republican members of the committee, was attracted to Mr. Doar by the fact that Mr. Doar is a Republican and was first appointed to the Justice Department in 1960 by President Eisenhower.

Other known prospects for the impeachment counsel's post have backgrounds with either bipartisan or minimally political flavor.

Mr. Lacey, who is 53, is also a Republican. He was appointed to the United States District Court in Newark in 1971, and as United States District Attorney for New Jersey two years earlier by President Nixon. He was said several months ago

to be prepared to leave the bench, preferring the faster tempo of law practice to the more deliberate pace of a judgeship.

Mr. Gossett, who is 69, is a partner in the Detroit law firm of Dykema, Gossett, Spencer, Goodnow & Trigg. He was a vice president and general counsel of the Ford Motor Company from 1947 to 1962. He served briefly under President Kennedy as a deputy special representative for trade negotiations and was president of the American Bar Association in 1968 and 1969.

Mr. Keeton, whose 54th birthday was today, teaches trial procedures and insurance practice at Harvard. Congressional sources said that he was one of the developers of the "no-fault" automobile insurance plan, which Massachusetts was the first state to adopt.

One Congressional colleague said that Mr. Rodino had a list of 12 candidates, at least two of whom had ruled themselves out for health or other reasons, and that he was focusing on five or six of the prospective appointees. He is expected to make a decision tomorrow or Tuesday and, if his choice agrees to take the \$36,000 post, announce it later this week.

Paper Urges Impeachment

CHARLOTTE, N. C., Dec. 16 (UPI)—The Charlotte Observer, the largest newspaper in the Carolinas, called on Congress today to impeach President Nixon. "Without impeachment it seems clear the country will not be able to obtain the evidence necessary to convict or clear Mr. Nixon," the editorial said.

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