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Impeachment Aide Choice Seen Made

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House Judiciary Committee Chairman Peter Rodino (D-N.J.) is expected to announce on Thursday his choice for a special counsel to direct the committee's inquiry into whether there are grounds for the impeachment of President Nixon.

Sources close to Rodino said he made the final decision yesterday.

While the sources would not name the choice, the four candidates most frequently mentioned are John M. Doar, 52, a former assistant attorney general for civil rights from 1961 to 1967; Newark U.S. District Court Judge Frederick B. Lacey Jr., 53; former American Bar Association President William T. Gossett, 69; and Harvard University Law Professor Robert Keeton, 54.

Doar and Lacey are Republicans, a fact sources say would give them an advantage, since Rodino has frequently stated his intention to conduct a bipartisan inquiry.

The special counsel is expected to play a central role. He will head a staff of 31 lawyers, investigators and clerks, already hired, and sift the material relating to charges against the President, some of which has already been gathered from the Senate Watergate committee and other sources.

One member of the committee has even suggested that the inquiry be conducted in the manner of a grand jury, with the special counsel acting as the prosecutor. But no decision on procedures has been made.

Doar, who headed the government's drive against racial discrimination in the Kennedy and Johnson administrations, had close ties to the late Sen. Robert F. Kennedy. For the past six years he has directed the Bedford-Stuyvesant Development and Services Corp., which was founded by the late Senator Kennedy. Doar resigned from the organization Friday.

A former president of the New York Board of Education, Doar was appointed to the Justice Department by President Eisenhower in 1960.

Lacey was appointed U.S. district attorney for New

Jersey in 1969 by President Nixon, and to the U.S. District Court in Newark in 1971.

Gossett, president of the ABA from 1968 to 1969, is a partner in a Detroit law firm. He served President Kennedy as a deputy special representative for trade negotiations and was vice president and general counsel for the Ford Motor Co. from 1947 to 1962.

Keeton teaches trial procedures and insurance practice at Harvard, and was one of the developers of no-fault auto insurance for Massachusetts.

While Rodino was making his choice, a number of Republican members of the committee took to the House floor yesterday to complain that a timetable should be established for the impeachment inquiry and that decisions about it should not be made solely by the chairman or the special counsel.

Rep. Robert McClory (R-Ill.), second-ranking Republican on the committee, said, "For the inquiry to be in the sole control of the chairman of the committee—or worse, in the control of a staff or possibly outside consultants or experts . . . over whom the committee has little or no control, would be a disservice to the prerogatives and responsibilities of this committee and would be fraught with danger to Congress and the presidency as institutions."

McClory also said, "While some may feel that there is benefit from indecision—delay—and the uncertainty which hangs over this nation at this time, I am confident that it is the wish of you, Mr. Speaker, and the overwhelming majority of this House that the impeachment inquiry should be conducted expeditiously . . ."

While McClory urged that confidential evidence be heard in closed session, Lucy Wilson Benson, president of the League of Women Voters, urged in a letter to Rodino that the sessions be open.

She said the league has not taken a position on whether the President should be impeached,