

Rodino Hopes to Finish Inquiry On Impeachment by the Spring

By MARTIN TOLCHIN

Special to The New York Times

WASHINGTON, Dec. 18— Representative Peter W. Rodino, New Jersey Democrat who is chairman of the House Judiciary Committee, said today that he expected the inquiry into the possible impeachment of President Nixon to be completed this spring.

"We're hopeful that we'll be finished in the spring," Mr. Rodino said in an interview in the Speaker's Lobby, just off the House floor. "Our Republican colleagues want us to act expeditiously, and we intend to do so."

Some Republican members of Congress, including some on the Judiciary Committee, have expressed fears that the inquiry would be dragged out as long as possible, up to and possibly after the fall elections.

Mr. Rodino said that at the conclusion of the inquiry, a recommendation on impeachment would be made to the House.

The chairman said that he intended to appoint a special counsel on impeachment this week, and added that John M. Doar was a leading candidate. Mr. Doar is a former president of the New York City Board of Education.

Mr. Rodino said that Mr. Doar was a conservative Republican with a liberal civil rights record, and recalled that he had led the Government's drive against racial discrimination in the nineteen-sixties.

"I'm inclined toward a Republican, so there's no appearance of partisanship," Mr. Rodino said. "I'm looking for a man who's the essence of integrity, who's objective, and who isn't looking to make headlines."

Other candidates include William T. Gossett, a Detroit corporation lawyer who is a former president of the American Bar Association, and Robert E. Keeton, a professor of law at Harvard University.

The chairman said that thus far, 34 persons had been added to the committee's staff for the impeachment inquiry. These included 10 lawyers, 4 investigators, 18 clerical aides and two staff members of the Congressional Joint Committee on Internal Revenue Taxation.

Mr. Rodino said that despite some reports of waning interest in the Watergate scandal, and predictions that the impeachment issue had been eclipsed by the fuel shortage and the nation's economic woes, he had received 50,000 pieces of mail on impeachment since Dec. 10. "The country is aroused," Mr. Rodino said. "The country is eager for answers. The country is demanding action."

A total of 300,000 cards, letters and telegrams have thus far been received by Mr. Rodino. Of those counted, 223,000 favored impeachment, and 27,000 were opposed.

Mr. Rodino said that some letters were from parents who asked his advice on what to tell their children about the President's alleged misconduct. "These are the young who will inherit the land," Mr. Rodino said. "What do we tell them?"

He said that many letters came from Republicans, "conservatives, who say that they've always supported the President, but they want to know what's happening and why."

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