

On Mr. Nixon's Tenure

To the Editor:

I am not a supporter of President Nixon, and I will not be particularly concerned if he leaves office prior to the end of his term. However, I am concerned that if he is removed from office it be in a manner provided for in the Constitution.

The attempt of some editors, Congressmen and citizens' groups to force his resignation on the grounds that he has lost the confidence of the people and is unable to govern is a misguided effort to establish an ad hoc and bastard form of parliamentary system of government.

If we desire a chief executive more responsive to popular control, let us change the Constitution to form a parliamentary type of government. However, if we want to retain a stable system of government under our present Constitution, the tenure of a President in office must not be at the sufferance of the opinion-makers in the news media or the passions of the populace as reflected in the latest public-opinion poll. The Constitution wisely does not provide for removal of the President by popular referendum.

If the House Judiciary Committee can present evidence beyond reasonable doubt that President Nixon has committed high crimes and misdemeanors, he should be impeached, convicted and removed from office. If such evidence cannot be presented, it will be a serious error to force his resignation. If President Nixon can be forced to resign for suspected wrongdoing, future Presidents may be forced to resign for that or lesser reasons, and our system of government becomes unstable.

Let us adhere to the Constitution until proved that it no longer serves our needs.

CHARLES E. OGLESBY

North Falmouth, Mass., Jan. 16, 1974

To the Editor:

The dominant wing of the Republican party continues to insult the intelligence of the American voter—although cynics, pointing to past successes of such tactics, wonder whether there is any "insult" involved.

The President is not to be held accountable for his actions. The blame lies with the press or the "liberal Democrats" or some other convenient scapegoat. It seems to me we've had enough of this kind of political dishonesty from public figures in various parts of the world in recent decades.

The ploy is equivalent in moral character to the venerable smoke-filled-room technique used rather extensively, one gathers, at one time in various cities and towns to cover up political chicanery of one sort or another or to distract public attention from the real issues.

The charges made against the President are either true or false. That is the real issue. If they are false, he had it well within his power to prove them so at the beginning. The fact that he has made no effort to do so and has instead resorted to name-calling and other evasions is tantamount to an admission of guilt. Were he innocent, there would be no motive for knocking down the stovepipe.

The President and those who support him still prefer the image, not the fact; Operation Candor rather than candor; the sizzle, not the steak; propaganda, not truth. It's a time-honored policy, if hardly honorable, and it's beginning to wear thin.

At least those of us who have hopes for the political maturity of the American people would like to think so.

ROBERT AIKEN ATHEARN

Middlebury, Vt., Jan. 19, 1974

To the Editor:

Those of us who feel a majority of the House should vote for an impeachment resolution should not be disappointed because of the recent polls that are being reported.

It must be remembered that the resolution on which the House will vote will be based on the facts assembled by its 38-member Judiciary Committee. Members of the Judiciary Committee hope that a recommendation to the House will be ready sometime in the spring, but for any Congressman to respond to the question "How will you vote on impeachment?" at this time really makes a mockery of due process; any Congressman worth his salt will want to wait until he can examine the Judiciary Committee's report in full.

It is therefore important for those of us who feel the House should act positively with respect to an impeachment resolution to "keep the faith," continue to impress our own Congressman with our particular point of view and perhaps respectfully ask the pollsters to stop placing our Representatives in embarrassing positions.

FRANK E. KARELSEN 3d

New York, Jan. 18, 1974

To the Editor:

Enjoyable as Clare Booth Luce's soliloquy [Op-Ed Jan. 11] is, the prediction of a stock-market crash and governmental standstill following impeachment procedures just doesn't ring true.

Instead, the country could experience a renaissance—we'd witness a rebirth of justice in this country. Impeachment would go a long way toward welding our double standard of justice—one for the rich and politically powerful and one for the average citizen. Instead of being haunted by the hypocrisy of our "democracy," we might point to an impeached Richard Nixon and say, "Look, in America everyone's equal under the law."

Perhaps the stock market would soar.

CLARE HOWARD

Bronxville, N. Y., Jan. 14, 1974