

### *Timing of Impeachment*

President Nixon may be indebted to the chairman of the House Judiciary Committee, Peter Rodino of New Jersey, before the impeachment issue is settled. If, as Joseph Alsop reported in his column of January 28, 1974, Mr. Rodino's prediction that his committee will take a full year to deal with the President's impeachment is correct, history suggests there is no reason for Mr. Nixon to worry about finishing out his term if he so chooses.

Looking back at the history of the impeachment proceedings against President Andrew Johnson, we find that those proceedings started in January 1867, and that the House passed its impeachment resolution in February 1868. The trial before the Senate lasted from March 30, to May 26, 1868. With that timetable as a background, one can assume that if Mr. Rodino is correct today, his committee cannot hand down its decision for action by the full House until late this year, or, considering that this is an election year, until early in 1975. It is anybody's guess as to how long the House will take to act on the passage, or rejection, of an impeachment resolution, but one might conjecture a date somewhere around mid-1975.

At this point we must anticipate all sorts of delaying actions by both the President and the Senate, but even assuming recognition of the urgency of the problem, national issues, including an upcoming presidential election, preceded by two conventions, certainly would do little to speed up events. There does not, therefore, seem to be very much time left to make impeachment an issue, and perhaps it would be more to the point, as Archibald Cox has stated, "for all those deeply concerned with our government to bend some of their time and effort away from the excitement of factual disclosures to the very arduous task of formulating and thus creating a substantive law of impeachment where now there is none."

B. M. KASSELL,

Arlington.