



Hoped-for Sleeper Of Nixon's Lawyer

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IT IS a reasonable bet that the differences between the House Judiciary Committee and the White House will be composed in a fairly amiable manner. This is the result desired by the chairman of the Judiciary Committee, Representative Peter Rodino; by the special counsel John Doar; and by President Nixon's lawyer, James D. St. Clair.

Where there is a will, there is usually a way. Thus St. Clair is likely to be given some share in questioning the witnesses making depositions for Doar — as is only fair and proper. Doar is likely to narrow the far too numerous list of charges against the President. And St. Clair is likely to persuade his extremely reluctant client to give the Judiciary Committee access to all White House material that is genuinely relevant to the committee's great task.

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NONE of these results are sure, please note. Assume for a moment that Rodino and Doar were approaching their task in the spirit of a hanging judge and a headline-hungry prosecuting attorney. In that case, they would be mainly thinking of how to secure a sure majority for a bill of impeachment in the House of Representatives.

In consequence, they would not be sincerely working to compose their differences with the White House. They would instead be seeking to inflame the differences, and thereby to convict the White

House of obstructing the Judiciary Committee.

Ergo, Rodino's approach is by no means that of a hanging judge, and Doar's approach is by no means that of a headline-hunting prosecutor.

This leads, finally, to the suggestion that in Washington, great numbers of people are counting all sorts of chickens before they are hatched. Consider, for instance, the House Democratic leader, Representative T. P. O'Neill of Massachusetts. "Tip" O'Neill is the known source of the prediction by Senator Mike Mansfield of Montana that a bill of impeachment will in fact be voted by the House.

Such a vote is desired by "Tip" O'Neill, who is both violently partisan and always eager to please his professor-constituents in Cambridge.

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QUITE aside from the Republicans, there are at least four Democrats on the committee who are potential swing voters, including Rodino himself.

So you come down to the problem of the facts themselves. If the facts are not fatally damaging to the President, the Judiciary Committee may quite possibly report the impeachment matter to the House "without prejudice" — making another factual presentment and offering no recommendation. If a mere minority of the committee reports for impeachment, the House will certainly vote against the bill. So there you have the hoped-for sleeper of James D. St. Clair.