

Editor — I am thoroughly dismayed and disgusted by President Nixon's latest attempt to bypass the Congress and the American judicial system.

By taking his personal defense of Watergate directly to the people on national television he has abused the privilege as President and perverted the impeachment process. Because he is President he has received free prime time on national television to make allegations against others, discredit a prime witness, John Dean, and assert his innocence. Will the networks offer free time to Dean to defend himself or to the special prosecutor to present the case?

Clearly Mr. Nixon holds himself above the law and intends to do so as long as he can get away with it. More than ever we need a fair and impartial fact finding procedure to determine the guilt or innocence of President Nixon. This is why the House needs to begin impeachment proceedings.

MADELEINE BERKE.

Oakland.

Editor — Having watched President Nixon's speech to the nation April 29, I am convinced of two things: Mr. Nixon will go down in history as the greatest president of the 20th century, and that congressional Democrats are like spoiled little brats — they are determined to see Mr. Nixon destroyed, even if it means the destruction of the Constitution, the Presidency, and the nation.

THOMAS M. EDWARDS.

San Francisco.

Editor — The President's decision to turn over edited transcripts in lieu of the tapes leaves me unimpressed. His claim that these transcripts will absolve him of any guilt in the Watergate matter ignores the central issue, namely, the Judiciary Committee's request for, and need for, the tapes themselves.

Nowhere in the vast body of American law is it given to the person under investigation to determine what evidence is relevant,

in what form it shall be submitted, and who shall be authorized to review it. To accede to this ingenious and totally unprecedented view of the judicial process is to make a mockery of that very process.

The Judiciary Committee should pursue vigorously its original intention of securing the tapes. It is a sound and reasonable course, and in keeping with the most deeply ingrained American legal traditions.

JACK FASMAN.

Redwood City.

Editor — The President's refusal to obey the Judiciary Committee's subpoena and give up the tapes prevents resolution of the vital question of whether the tapes have been edited or otherwise doctored. As the famous 18-minute gap shows, this is a very real possibility and one that can only be dealt with by experts working directly with the original tapes.

DAVID CAULKINS.

Los Altos.

Editor — President Nixon's appeal should fall on deaf ears. His greatly heralded answer to the tapes subpoena turned into an attempt to discredit John Dean as a potential witness, conveniently ignored the existence of other testimony against him.

Furthermore, while Dean has given his testimony under oath in public, Nixon offers transcripts and unsworn testimony which as evidence are worthless.

His likening of himself to President Lincoln was self-serving and repulsive and should be recognized as an appeal to the emotions and nothing more.

EMIL ZUGNONI.

Albany.

The Trial

Editor — President Nixon's official expression of joy at the innocent verdict handed down in the Mitchell-Stans trial has cast further doubt on the ability of the federal executive branch to investigate and prosecute itself.

However ingenuous and sponta-

neous Nixon's words might have been, their effect can only be to impede a vigorous further investigation into Watergate-related crimes.

Immediately after the trial, we saw the paradox of the head of the governmental branch doing the prosecuting applauding a not-guilty verdict. This inevitably will damage morale at the Justice Department, for how can federal prosecutors continue to investigate these matters fully when they sense that their cases will fail in court? How would a young assistant prosecutor feel if, upon losing an important case, the district attorney went up to the jury and congratulated them for refusing to believe his colleague's case?

I am not saying that I still believe Mitchell and Stans to be guilty, regardless of the verdict. All I am saying is that, upon completion of a federal case as sensitive as this one, when the President cannot dispute the verdict for emotional reasons, yet cannot applaud the verdict for ethical reasons, he should simply keep his mouth shut.

DAVID CISMOWSKI.

Santa Cruz.

Editor — The concept of reasonable doubt has become so highly developed in our system of law that it has been shown that if one commits a crime the probability of his conviction for that crime is only about one per cent.

When a radical celebrity is accused of a crime the probability of conviction approaches zero. Acquittal will become synonymous with fair trial, and will be offered to the public as proof that "the system works."

Some will consider the conclusion of the Mitchell-Stans trial an outrage.

I hope that you will give me the space to remind these hard-hearted people that even an old ex-politician down on his luck deserves equal protection under our laws.

ROBERT KOCH.

Mill Valley.