

Feedback to Impeach Vote

By Jack Nelson
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Washington

Representative Thomas F. Railsback's agony over voting to impeach President Nixon is far from over.

The Illinois Republican walked into his office earlier this week and found that more than a few of his constituents do not look upon him as a profile in courage.

Enclosed in one letter from his district were three dimes with the message, "Judas got 30 pieces of silver — here are yours."

Railsback has received many other critical messages, including several packages containing rocks and the message, "Let him who is without sin cast the first stone."

Along with six other Republican "swing" members of the House Judiciary Committee who ultimately voted for impeachment, Railsback



AP Wirephoto

REPUBLICAN THOMAS RAILSBACK VOTED TO IMPEACH Folks back home let him know what they thought of his decision

said he also had received messages from Republican constituents threatening political retaliation.

Although Railsback says he is satisfied he did the right thing, he is worried about his political future.

"Sure I'm getting some messages from Republicans like this one," he said, holding up a message which said, "as conservative Republicans, we are 100 per cent behind you; keep up your good work."

"But I'm getting some like these, too," he said, holding up two letters. He read one of them aloud: "How could you fall in the gleeful Democrats' trap and betray your party and your President?"

Railsback shook his head. "They mentioned everybody but the country," he muttered.

The other letter, handwritten on lined tablet paper and signed by a couple who said they would never vote for him again, blamed Watergate on the Democrats:

"This whole Watergate affair is the worst affair ever. As we watched and listened it proves over and over again whenever the Democrats are in a majority, it is just one mess after another."

Railsback said, "Of course, I'm getting some letters from Democrats who feel sorry for me because I am losing public support and say they will vote for me in November. That's fine. But I need the Republicans because that's where my political future is."

First elected to Congress in 1966, Railsback won reelection with 68 per cent of the vote in 1970 and ran un-

opposed in 1972 when Mr. Nixon carried his district with 62 per cent of the vote.

Railsback faces Democratic opposition in November's general election.

Railsback is agonizing now over how strongly he should work for impeachment when the issue reaches the House floor.

"I've got to return a call now to Rodino (Chairman Peter W. Rodino Jr. of the Judiciary Committee)," Railsback said. "I think I know what he wants."

Rodino is sounding out the 26 committee members who voted for impeachment in trying to determine who should carry the brunt of pro-impeachment arguments on the House floor.

"I feel obligated to explain my own vote, but I don't think I would have my heart in being a forceful prosecutor," Railsback said. "If it was a Democratic president I didn't like — I didn't like LBJ — I could do it."