

# Most Damaging Case Against

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When it was over, the most damaging case against the President had been made by those who stayed with him to the end.

More than any others, their words seriously undercut previous presidential and White House statements about lack of wrong-doing in the Executive Mansion.

What mattered most was not the fire-eating, anti-Nixon, liberal Democratic words of the Waldies, Dri-nans and Conyers. Nor was it the widely publicized Republican defectors—the Butlers, Railsbacks, Hogans and McClorys—or the loss of Southern Democrats from strongly pro-Nixon district, although these certainly

have had considerable political impact.

The deepest wounds came from the core of what had been the Nixon constituency in the Congress.

For those millions of Americans watching who clung to the belief that the case against the President and his men was being leveled by a combination of the liberals in the press and Congress, the six days of televised debates must have been dismaying.

Tuesday night, in the final hours of the impeachment hearings, the committee was wrestling with questions over the President's taxes. The President's side carried convincingly when the vote came. Yet even in winning, the President was losing.

Delbert Latta of Ohio, who supported the President on all five impeachment roll calls:

"So we pay our taxes and I think the President of the United States should pay his taxes likewise. And I find him guilty tonight of bad judgment and gross engli-gence."

Wiley Mayne of Iowa, another Republican who stayed with the President to the end:

"Regrettably it seems to me this President has set a very sorry example in the way that he has performed this basic obligation of American citizenship."

Throughout the wearying hours of debate, the President's staunchest supporters were defending him in

largely narrow, legalistic terms.

There wasn't enough specific legal evidence to justify impeachment, they were arguing. But they studiously were not condoning his ac-

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tions or those of his subordi-nates.

In the process, the long White House attempt to depict the impeachment forces as a lynch mob of liberals and a kangaroo court came close to being demolished.

Even the strongest legal defense of Mr. Nixon often was accompanied by harsh personal judgments.

Carlos J. Moorhead of California:

"... Although I deplore

# Nixon Made by Backers

any element that we see here in the tapes of any lack of moral knowledge or feeling in some instances... I believe that the President of the United States has tried to come to the best conclusions that he could for our people."

David W. Dennis of Indiana:

"I am as shocked as anyone by the misdeeds of Watergate. Richard Nixon has much to answer for, and he has even more to answer for to me as a conservative Republican than he does to my liberal friends on the other side of this aisle."

Charles W. Sandman Jr. of New Jersey:

"Now, I want to say that at the very outset this is not a case as far as I am con-

cerned for or against Richard Nixon... I am not a nit-picker. You can find almost anything that will disturb you. There are lots of things wrong, there are lots of crimes committed by lots of people, but were they placed at the door of the White House? I do not think so."

Joseph Maraziti of New Jersey:

"It is apparent from what we have heard that members of the Committee to Re-elect the President and members of the White House staff — yes, even prominent members of that White House staff — have been involved in illegal, criminal activities, as the gentleman from New York has just mentioned.

"But let me say that I con-

demn their illegal actions and those who are guilty should, and I am sure will be, properly punished according to law."

Mayne of Iowa, in his opening statement:

"I for one, and I know I am joined by many of my colleagues, if not all, certainly deplore the sorry example which was set by the Chief Executive himself for his fellow citizens in his personal as well as his official conduct and responsibilities.

"But, the question is not whether we condemn and deplore the presidential action or inaction, no matter how disappointing it may have been. The question before us is, was the President guilty of treason, bribery or other high crimes and mis-

demeanors which are the only constitutional grounds for impeachment."

What was coming over, in the full glare of the television lights and before millions of citizens, was a devastating acknowledgement of misdeeds committed by the President and his men. The emerging portrait could hardly have been any comfort to the President.

It was his friends, not his enemies, that were striking those blows.

Long ago, in another presidential ordeal, Warren G. Harding expressed a similar thought.

"I have no trouble with my enemies," he said. "But my goddam friends... they are the ones that keep me walking the floor nights."