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# 'Nixon Should Step Aside'

## Washington

The chairman of the congressional Joint Economic Committee said yesterday that President Nixon should immediately turn over his official duties to Vice President Gerald R. Ford until the impeachment proceedings are settled.

Senator William Proxmire (Dem-Wis.), said such a temporary move is "absolutely essential" to enable the government to draw up an effective program for fighting inflation.

At the same time Proxmire said in a televised interview that it would be "just plain wrong" for Mr. Nixon to resign before the impeachment process has fully run its course, because "if President Nixon is convinced he's innocent, I think he has every right to demand a trial and I think he should have it."

Proxmire noted that Mr. Nixon in recent days has twice had to cancel meetings with his economic advisers in order to listen to

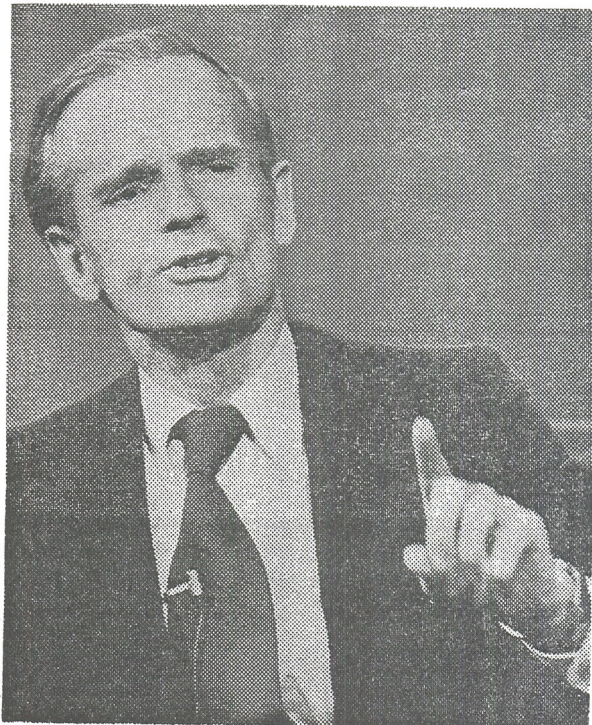
White House tapes which the Supreme Court has ordered him to surrender to special prosecutor Leon Jaworski.

"He's preoccupied with his defense, as he must be," the Wisconsin Democrat said. "And it's going to get worse and worse as the weeks go on."

Asked on ABC's "Issues and Answers" program what steps must be taken to tackle the nation's spiralling inflation rate, now up to about 12 per cent, Proxmire replied:

"No. 1 and by far the most important, as an absolute prerequisite, is that President Nixon temporarily step down, under the 25th Amendment and hand over to Gerry Ford the full authority of being President of the United States. I think that's absolutely essential."

The 25th Amendment, adopted in 1967, provides for the vice president to temporarily become acting president if the President tells Congress that he is unable to discharge the powers and



UPI Telephoto

## SENATOR WILLIAM PROXMIRE 'Plain wrong for Nixon to resign'

duties of his office.

Proxmire said that "the integrity of this President, the honesty of this President is going to be before the American people on television" during impeachment proceedings in the House and a possible Senate trial.

"And it's going to be extremely hard for President Nixon in these circumstan-

ces to pull the country together, as he must to appeal to labor, to appeal to management" in attempts to stem inflation, Proxmire said.

He said that if Ford took over temporarily, he would be "in a position to rally support. A new man is always given the benefit of the doubt . . ."

Associated Press