

For the Record

When Richard Nixon resigned, Senate Majority Leader Mike Mansfield suggested that the impeachment process should continue without him. Some members of the House argued, less radically, that the Judiciary Committee's impeachment report should be adopted formally by the full House. Such proposals were made with posterity in mind—to show that Nixon had been probed carefully and found guilty of impeachable offenses. But few congressmen had any heart for the gesture, and this week the once stormy process of impeachment will come instead to a quiet end.

The moment will be marked by the presentation to the House of the Judiciary Committee's final report, written by the Democratic majority. The 170-page draft of the document which was circulated last week contains no surprises, and as one official predicted, it will "pass quietly into oblivion" without further action. But the report does represent a final judgment on Richard Nixon. Its key finding: "That from shortly after the break-in on June 17, 1972, President Nixon personally directed his subordinates to take action designed to delay, impede and obstruct the investigation of the Watergate break-in: to cover up, conceal and protect those responsible: and to conceal . . . other unlawful covert activities."

Charges: From the historical point of view, however, the most important report may be the one coming from the panel's Republican minority. A draft written by the minority staff expresses reservations about some of the charges against Nixon. But it concludes: "We hope . . . that it will not hereafter be said by many that Richard Nixon was 'hounded from office,' for that is not true. It was Richard Nixon, not his longtime critics, who impeded the FBI's investigation of the Watergate affair by wrongfully trying to implicate the CIA. It was Richard Nixon, not seasoned Nixon-baiters, who created and preserved the damning evidence of that transgression and who, knowing that it had been subpoenaed by both this committee and the special prosecutor, concealed its terrible import until he could do so no longer."

8-19-74

newsweek