

Henry Ruth's Tasks

To their credit, Attorney General Saxbe and the White House moved quickly on Leon Jaworski's recommendation that Henry S. Ruth Jr. be named Special Watergate Prosecutor. Mr. Ruth is a highly esteemed and dedicated public servant who has already earned the gratitude of the American people and the loyalty of the Watergate Special Prosecution staff. Not the least of his services to the country was the feat of keeping the staff together in the wake of the "Saturday Night Massacre," which, under less able interim leadership, could have devastated the extraordinarily able operation Archibald Cox had put together.

Although, when he submitted his resignation, Mr. Jaworski proclaimed—mistakenly, in our view—that the bulk of his work had been done, Mr. Ruth still faces a number of formidable tasks. The most visible, obviously, is overseeing the large and volatile cover-up trial. From Mr. Jaworski's exit interviews there also appear to be a number of continuing investigations—the milk industry contributions, the settlement of the I.T.T. anti-trust cases, the involvements of Bebe Rebozo in handling 1972 campaign contributions—to name just a few. And, there are at least two other cases which can be expected to raise high public interest—those apparently being developed against former Treasury Secretary John Connally and former Nixon finance chairman Maurice Stans.

It is necessary that as much as possible of the story of the Watergate abuses be made public. This involves, first of all, dealing definitively with President Ford's ill-advised agreement on the Nixon tapes and documents and gaining as much access to those records as needed to complete the investigations and prosecutions. And it also involves writing as complete a final report for Congress as possible, covering not just the criminal prosecutions, but also non-criminal abuses of power which threatened the fabric of American democracy.

On both scores, Congress can and should be helpful. The Senate has already passed and sent to the House a bill which provides for the Government to retain the Nixon records. The House should make passage of that bill its first order of business when it returns from recess.

Mr. Jaworski contended that he needed special Congressional authorization to include the complete record of the Nixon investigation in his final report. That action too should be taken by Congress after the recess. Mr. Ruth has been left with a very full plate and he needs to be given unstinting Congressional help to wind up the Watergate story once and for all.