

## Before Quitting, Nixon Got Offer On Dropping Impeachment Move

WASHINGTON, Dec. 16 (UPI)—In the last 48 hours of his Presidency, Richard M. Nixon was told that two key House Democrats—House Speaker Carl Albert, the Speaker of the Judiciary Committee and Chairman Peter W. Rodino Jr., had said they would drop impeachment proceedings if he resigned. (SEE SFC 16 DEC)

Representative Robert McClory, Republican of Illinois, a senior member of the Judiciary Committee, said today that the message was relayed to the President but Mr. McClory was unsure whether it played any role in Mr. Nixon's decision on Aug. 8, 1974, to leave office.

Although the objective of the impeachment inquiry was to determine whether there were grounds for the removal of Mr. Nixon from office, there was discussion even after he resigned of continuing the proceedings to establish the case against him. There was precedent for impeaching an official who had resigned.

Mr. Rodino, recalling his conversation with Mr. McClory in those tense days, said today, "I said I did not think anyone would want to see the President go to jail, but we would want to see the cause of justice served."

Speaker Albert said, "I think I told Peter Rodino that there would be no point in going ahead with the [impeachment] proceedings, but don't hold me to that."

Representative Rodino, McClory and Albert all agreed that members of Congress had no role in deciding whether criminal proceedings should or could be brought.

The incident was brought to light today by The Los Angeles Times.

Mr. McClory, Mr. Rodino, Representative Don Edwards, Democrat of California, and William E. Timmons, a White House aide, all confirmed the basics of the account, The Times said.

Mr. McClory said he was in Mr. Rodino's office on Aug. 7, 1974, with Mr. Edwards, another committee member, discussing the scheduled debate in the House on impeachment, when Mr. Rodino said:

"I sure hope he does resign. It would save the country and everybody a lot of trouble, because that would be the end of it. Nobody would want to go after him after that."

Mr. McClory said Mr. Edwards had agreed that the two Democrats told him that the Speaker felt the same way. Mr. McClory continued:

"I said, 'Pete, you're telling me this like you want me to communicate it' and he said 'Definitely—our guys don't want to pursue him if he resigns and that will be the end of it.'"

Mr. Rodino told The Times he did not recall specifically telling Mr. McClory to relay the message, but had presumed he would.

Mr. McClory said he had sought out Speaker Albert, who confirmed that if President Nixon resigned, the Democrats would drop proposals, then being debated, to continue with an impeachment trial even if the President left office.

Mr. McClory said that he had first tried to pass the word through the office of Vice President Ford, but was told by a Ford aide, "The Vice President is not taking part in the events occurring now . . . he would not want to have anything to do with it."