

**Here in their own words are some of those thoughts direct from the July 24-25, 1974 Rodino Committee debate on articles of impeachment.**

**CHAIRMAN PETER RODINO**

**Page 2 and 4**

**“...The Founding Fathers with their recent experience of monarchy and their determination that government be accountable and lawful, wrote into the Constitution a special oath that the President, and only the President must take at his inauguration. In that oath, the President swears that he will take care that the laws be faithfully executed....**

**”The great wisdom of our founders entrusted this process to the collective wisdom of many men. Each of those chosen to toil for the people at the great forge of democracy - the House of Representatives - has a responsibility to exercise independent judgment. I pray that we will each act with the wisdom that compels us in the end to be but decent men who seek only the truth....**

**DEMOCRAT HAROLD D. DONOHUE**

**Page 7**

**“...Now, in truth, there were and there are no positive material instruments available to us such as those by which we can measure a precise distance or pronounce the exact time of day to guarantee the errorless performance of our duty. The human means through which we must try to make the right measurement of conduct that is required in this historical task exists only in the individual minds and consciences of each of the committee members....”**

**REPUBLICAN ROBERT MCCLORY**

**Page 8**

**“...Preserving our Republican Party to my mind does not imply that we must preserve and justify a man in office who would deliberately and arbitrarily defy the legal processes of the Congress, nor can our party be enhanced if we as Republican members of the U.S. House of Representatives, tolerate the flouting of our laws by a President who is constitutionally charged with seeing that the laws are faithfully executed as provided in article 2.**

**We will enhance our Republican Party and assure a viable two-party system only if we are courageous enough and wise enough to reject such conduct even if attributed to a Republican President. The second question we must answer is not what is best for our party, but what is best for our Nation....”**

**DEMOCRAT ROBERT W. KASTENMEIER**

**Page 16**

**“...Impeachment is one way in which the American people can say to themselves that they care enough about their institutions, their own freedom and their own claim to self-government, their own national honor, to purge from the Presidency anyone who has dishonored that office. This power of impeachment is not intended to obstruct or weaken the office of the Presidency. It is intended as a final remedy against executive excess, not to protect the Congress against the President, but to protect the people against the abuse of power by a Chief Executive. And it is the obligation of the Congress to defend a democratic society against a Chief Executive who might be corrupt.**

**Justice Brandeis warned Americans of the dangers of illegality of official conduct. ‘In a government of laws,’ he wrote, ‘the existence of the government will be imperiled if it fails to observe the law scrupulously. Our government is the potent, the omnipresent teacher. For good or for ill, it teaches the whole people by its example. Crime is contagious. If government**

**becomes a law breaker, it breeds contempt for the law. It invites every man to become a law unto himself. It invites anarchy....”**

**REPUBLICAN TOM RAILSBACK**

**Page 28**

**“...Some of my friends from Illinois - I received all kinds of mail; some of my people say that the country cannot afford to impeach a President. Let me say to these people, many of whom are good supporters and friends, I have spoken to countless others including many, many young people, and if the young people in this country think that we are not going to handle this thing fairly, if we are not going to really try to get to the truth, you are going to see the most frustrated people, the most turned-off people, the most disillusioned people, and it is going to make the period of LBJ in 1968, 1967, look tame. So I hope that we just keep our eye on trying to get to the truth....”**

**DEMOCRAT WALTER FLOWERS**

**Page 59**

**“...You know, the power of the Presidency is a public trust, just like our office.**

**And the people must be able to believe and rely on their President. Yet, there is some evidence before us that shows that the President has given solemn public assurances to the people involving the truth and the faith of his powerful office when those assurances were not true, but were designed to deceive the people and mislead the agencies of government who were investigating the charges against Mr. Nixon’s men. If the trust of the people and in the world of the man, or men, or women, to whom they have given their highest honor, or any public trust is betrayed, if the people, cannot know that their President is candid and truthful with them, then I say the very basis of our government is undermined....”**

**DEMOCRAT BARBARA JORDAN**

**Page 111**

**“...’Who can so properly be the inquisitors for the nation as the representatives of the nation themselves?’ (Federalist 65) The subject of its jurisdiction are those offenses which proceed from the misconduct of public men. That is what we are talking about. In other words, the jurisdiction comes from the abuse of some violation of public trust. It is wrong, I suggest, it is a misreading of the Constitution for any member here to assert that for a member to vote for an Article of Impeachment means that the member must be convinced that the President should be removed from office. The Constitution doesn’t say that. The powers relating to impeachment are an essential check in the hands of this body, the legislature, against and upon the encroachment of the Executive. In establishing the division between the two branches of the legislature, the House and the Senate, assigning to the one the right to accuse and to the other the right to judge, the Framers of the Constitution were very astute. They did not make the accusers and the judges the same person....”**

**REPUBLICAN LAWRENCE J. HOGAN**

**Page 62**

**“....Now, the first responsibility facing members of this committee was to try and define what an impeachable offense is. The Constitution does not define it. The precedents which are sparse do not give us any real guidance as to what constitutes an impeachable offense. So each of us in our own conscience, in our own mind, in our own heart, after much study, had to decide for ourselves what constitutes an impeachable offense. Obviously, it must be something so grievous that it warrants the removal of the President of the United States from office. I do not agree with those that say that an impeachable offense is anything that Congress wants it to be and I do not agree with those who say that it must be an indictable criminal offense. But somewhere in between is the standard against which we must measure the President’s conduct....”**

**“....Do yet in the United States the people still govern? Do they govern through elected representatives? In this era of power that our governmental system has brought us to in the world where our involvement in foreign trade and foreign affairs puts the President in front as the symbol of our national pride and as the bearer of our flag, and here we have in the House of Representatives 435 voices speaking on behalf of different constituencies with no public relations man employed by the House of Representatives, and I wonder if the people still do want their elected Representatives to fulfill their oath to preserve, protect, and defend the Constitution of the United States. Do you want us to exercise the duty and responsibility of the power of impeachment, whether that means conviction or exculpation?**

**You know, some of the things that cause me to wonder are the phrases that keep coming back to me, ‘oh, it is just politics,’ or, ‘let him who is without sin cast the first stone.’**

**Are we so morally bankrupt that we would accept a past course of wrongdoing or that we would decide that the system that we have is incapable of sustaining a system of law because we aren’t perfect?...”**