

JFK-King Slayings

Probe Is Extended

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WASHINGTON (AP) — The House voted yesterday to give its beleaguered assassinations committee two more years to probe the murders of President John F. Kennedy and civil rights leader Dr. Martin Luther King.

The vote was 230 to 181.

The action came only hours after the committee's controversial chief counsel, Richard A. Sprague, resigned his post in an attempt to save the committee by assuaging House members who sought his ouster.

Without the extension, the panel would have died at midnight tonight.

The final vote came after the House rejected a rare motion by an opponent of the assassinations panel to go into secret session to hear the evidence collected so far.

"I think we have a right to hear what this evidence is," said Rep. Robert E. Bauman, R-Md.

However, the House rejected that motion 226 to 185 after committee Chairman Louis Stokes, D-Ohio, said the committee feared that information such as the names of witnesses the committee has talked to or wants to talk to would leak out and put their lives in danger.

(On the vote to continue the probe Rep. Joseph G. Gaydos, D-McKeesport, voted no. All other area representatives

voted yes. Others recorded as voting were John Dent, D-Ligonier; William Moorhead, D-Shadyside; Austin Murphy, D-Monongahela; Douglas Walgren, D-Mt. Lebanon; Gary Myers, R-Butler.)

The committee accepted chief council Sprague's resignation at a meeting only hours before the decisive House vote.

In voting 11 to 1 to accept Sprague's resignation, several committee members bitterly accused former Chairman Henry B. Gonzalez of what they called smear tactics and character assassination to drive Sprague out.

The committee accepted Sprague's resignation after an informal headcount indicated the House might kill the committee if Sprague stayed.

The developments came a day after a potential witness in the committee's Kennedy probe was found dead, apparently a suicide. The victim, George de Mohrenschildt, 65, was found fatally shot in an oceanfront mansion near Palm Beach, Fla.

House committee member Rep. Richardson Preyer, D-N.C., had called de Mohrenschildt a "crucial witness." De Mohrenschildt, a Russian-born engineer, was a onetime acquaintance of Lee Harvey Oswald, who the Warren Commission said was the sole assassin of Kennedy.