

The Public Speaks

Massive Input of Impeachment Calls

By William Claiborne
Washington Post Staff Writer

Public opinion telegrams, letters and telephone calls—an overwhelming majority of which advocated, the impeachment of President Nixon—poured into Washington yesterday in unprecedented volume.

More than a quarter of a million such responses to Mr. Nixon's firing of Watergate Special Prosecutor Archibald Cox were received on Capitol Hill, at the White House and at various government agencies.

The deluge, which came before the President said he would turn the Watergate tapes over to a federal judge, overtaxed hundreds of Western Union offices around the country and created a massive backlog of messages in the nation's capital.

The Senate Watergate committee said it received 1,500 telegrams urging immediate impeachment of Mr. Nixon, with another 1,013 recommending that no compromise be struck over the issue of the presidential tapes. A committee source said at 3 p.m. that 2,000 more telegrams had yet to be opened.

Even the most conservative senators and representatives reported lopsided tabulations that favored impeachment, although they stressed that the opinions had all been formed before Mr. Nixon decided to surrender the tapes. They also observed that constituents who would become aroused enough to advocate immediate impeachment were more likely to send telegrams than those favoring a more moderate solution.

Sen. Barry Goldwater (R-Ariz.) reported receiving 279 telegrams for impeachment, and only 6 against. Sen. James L. Buckley (R-Con. N.Y.) received 300 telegrams, nearly all of which advocated impeachment, according to an aide.



By Joe Heiberger—The Washington Post

Ruckelshaus: "Glad to see the President has complied."

The greatest volume in the Senate was reported by Sen. John V. Tunney (D-Calif.), who by 1 p.m. yesterday had received more than 6,000 telegrams. Of the first 1,300 counted, a staff aide said, 1,299 advocated impeachment.

Sen. Alan Cranston (D-Calif.) received 2,849 telegrams advocating impeachment, and only 21 against such a measure, an aide said.

A spokesman for Sen. Jacob Javits (R-N.Y.) said 360 wires were received, all but one of which opposed the President. Sen. Walter Mondale (D-Minn.) said he received 261 to 3 in favor of impeachment, while Sen. Birch Bayn (D-Ind.) received more than 100 telegrams, all opposed to Mr. Nixon.

Common characteristics of the telegrams sent to congressmen were brevity and causticism, the former trait resulting apparently from Western Union's 15-word limit for a \$2 public opinion telegram.

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"Mr. Nixon received his mandate from the people by devious means. He should be impeached," said one message to Rep. Peter Rodino (D-N.J.), who said he received 105 telegrams, all urging impeachment.

Other messages received by Rodino declared, "We feel our country has been betrayed," and "Nixon flouts the will of the courts and Congress—impeach now."

The term "dictator" cropped up repeatedly in telegrams, such as in the phrase, "We are not prepared to live under dictatorship," received by Sen. Dick Clark (D-Iowa). Clark, whose telegrams reportedly ran 4 to 1 for impeachment, received one message that said, "Nixon has a complete disregard for law and a lack of moral integrity."

Rep. William J. Scherle (R-Iowa) reported receiving 45 telegrams, including 40 for impeachment. One said, "Democracy not hypocrisy—impeach him!" Another said, "The only honorable response is to impeach."

"I don't think I've ever seen an issue in which the people have responded so totally one-sided," said an aide to Bayh. "It was literally 100 per cent against the President, from all over the country."

Some other telegram tallies compiled in a Washington Post survey yesterday:

Sen. Howard Baker (R-Tenn.), 378 for impeachment, 250 against the tapes compromise and 26 supporting Mr. Nixon; Sen. Frank

Church (D-Idaho), 50 "very heavily" favoring impeachment, according to a staff aide; Mark Hatfield (R-Ore.), 160 telegrams, all but 2 favoring impeachment; Sen. James Pearson (R-Kans.), 25 telegrams, all for impeachment or against the compromise; Sen. William B. Saxbe (R-Ohio), 141 for impeachment, 1 in support of the President; Sen. Richard S. Schweiker (R-Pa.), 600 telegrams, 10 of which favored Mr. Nixon's position; Rep. Robert Kastenmeier (D-Wisc.), 237 telegrams, all of which urged impeachment; Rep. Jack Kemp (R-N.Y.), 67 telegrams, all urging impeachment.

For the second consecutive day, the White House said it was unable to offer a tally of public opinion response to Mr. Nixon's actions, and that it did not know when even a total count of telegrams could be tabulated. Sources said, however, that more than 70,000 messages—including telegrams, telephone calls and letters—had been received since Saturday night, and that the majority opposed the dismissal of Cox and the dismantling of his prosecuting force.

Paid telegrams to Washington totaled more than 160,000 by 5 p.m. yesterday, according to Western Union. The telegraph system was running three times its normal volume, with thousands of additional messages being delivered through the more economical "Mailgram" system.