

Impeachment Inquiry Asked in House

By Mary Russell

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The House yesterday, in its first prolonged floor discussion on impeachment, heard Rep. Bella Abzug (D-N.Y.) call for the House to undertake an inquiry to determine whether there are grounds for impeaching the President.

The discussion, which took one and a half hours of the three hours granted for it, followed an attempt last Wednesday night by Rep. Paul N. (Pete) McCloskey (R-Calif.) to discuss impeachment. McCloskey's attempt was aborted when Republican Rep. Carl F. Landgrebe (Ind.) made a point of order that a quorum was not present and the House adjourned after an hour of parliamentary wrangling.

No one attempted to interrupt yesterday's discussion,

and only about 35 House members stayed to hear the speeches, which began about 5 p.m. In the end, only three Republicans remained on the floor, one of them being McCloskey, who said he has gotten permission for another hour-long discussion on Monday to respond to the suggestions presented yesterday and to discuss the "national security" question.

The speeches by a half dozen liberal Democrats were low-keyed and circumspect. No one called for impeachment, though Rep. Fortney (Pete) Stark (D-Calif.) and Rep. Yvonne Burke (D-Calif.) echoed Rep. Abzug's call for the House to set up a panel of inquiry, either through a special select committee or through the Judiciary Committee.

Rep. Stark said he intro-

duced resolution yesterday demanding that the Justice Department and all other government investigators make available to the House all information necessary to make a "responsible decision" on whether impeachment proceedings should be initiated against the President.

Rep. Abzug called for the House action in addition to the Senate Watergate hearings and the grand jury proceedings because "no other body is conducting a direct investigation into the conduct of the President, because no other body has the authority to do so."

Only the House can impeach or bring charges against the President, Vice President or other civil officers. The Senate tries the charges after impeachment is brought.

Rep. Ronald Dellums (D-Calif.) called on his colleagues to keep the possibility of impeachment "seriously in mind, and to start making clear in our minds where we draw the line; what — if anything — would we consider an impeachable offense."