

Nixon Probers Get \$1 Million

By Mary Russell

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A bitter partisan battle broke out on the floor yesterday before the House voted 367 to 51 to give the Judiciary Committee \$1 million to conduct its presidential impeachment inquiry.

Republicans charged that they had not been consulted on the \$1 million request and that 19 staff members had been hired without their consent.

Committee Republicans demanded that one-third to one-half of the impeachment inquiry staff be Republican, and sought a pledge from Judiciary Chairman Peter Rodino (D-N.J.) to that effect.

Rodino assured the Republicans they would be "treated fairly" and promised to consult the ranking

Republican, Rep. Edward Hutchinson (R-Mich.), before hiring more people to conduct the preliminary probe of whether grounds exist for impeaching the President.

He said the staff hired so far consisted of "seven or eight mail clerks" to open the more than 100,000 pieces of mail and take the phone calls the committee is receiving on impeachment. Rodino said he also hired an office manager to supervise this staff and had the loan of five clerks from the General Accounting Office.

Rodino said the added work required by the impeachment inquiry, by hearings on the confirmation of Rep. Gerald R. Ford as Vice President, and by hearings on bills to establish an independent Watergate special

prosecutor had severely drained his funds.

Republicans charged that not one meeting of the committee has been held to discuss the impeachment proceedings and that funding the inquiry before knowing its scope and nature was "premature."

Rep. Harold V. Froehlich (R-Wis.) asked:

"How can we have impartiality when the whole impeachment operation is being run out of the Majority Leader's and Speaker's offices and the chairman is only running errands?"

Rep. David Dennis (R-Ind.) said:

"I don't think my people want me to go home and say I voted \$1 million for impeachment of the President. It's improvident, premature and too much too soon."

Both Dennis and Froehlich are members of the Judiciary Committee.

Rep. Thomas P. O'Neill (D-Mass.) shot back, "If it wasn't for the scandalous tactics of this administration it wouldn't cost anything."

O'Neill, the Majority Leader, fired the opening gun when he declared, "It is deplorable that the President should invite members of Congress to White House luncheons in order to curry favor with his prospective grand jurors."

"It is unbecoming—if not improper—of the President that he should at this time attempt to influence votes."

O'Neill called on the House members to "preserve a cool impartiality" because "ultimately the entire House may be called upon to sit as a grand jury on charges against the president."

Though the final vote on the resolution to give an extra \$1 million to the Judiciary Committee was 367-51, the key vote was on a motion by Rep. William L. Dickinson (R-Ala.). Dickinson moved to recommit the resolution to the House Administration Committee and amend it to give the minority one-third of the staffing money and to provide that none of the funds be spent until the nature and scope of the inquiry was defined. He lost by an almost straight party line vote of 190-227.