

Quiz Role Urged for Nixon Aides

Washington

White House lawyers should be permitted to observe and cross-examine witnesses while they are being questioned by the House Judiciary Committee in an investigation of possible grounds for impeachment of President Nixon, the committee's ranking Republican said yesterday.

"I think that privilege should be accorded if they request it," Representative Edward Hutchinson (Rep-Mich.) said. He added that James D. St. Clair, President Nixon's top legal adviser, specifically should be allowed to do the cross-examining.

But Hutchinson emphasized that the subject of possible White House legal attendance during interrogation sessions "has not been decided by the committee and I don't know how the committee is going to resolve it."

He was interviewed following the release Thursday of a lengthy study by the committee staff which concluded that criminal acts are not a necessary ingredient in an impeachment proceeding. A Justice Department study, made public Friday, gave a more restrictive view on what constituted an impeachable offense by a president.

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Hutchinson, who rejected the report's conclusions, immediately after it was issued, repeated his stand that he will support any request for White House tapes and documents so long as the material is "relevant" to the investigation.

"The President has a right to protect . . . his branch of government from improper demands on the part of either of the other two branches of government," he said.

But he added that Con-

gress has the constitutional power of impeachment to uphold, "which is a grand inquest of the nation."

"... In that role, the House of Representatives, as the grand inquisitor certainly does have a right, I believe, to relevant information touching upon possible impeachable actions of the President," Hutchinson said.

The Michigan lawmaker summed up his views by saying: "Impeachment is something that will put the country through a terrible trauma and something that should be avoided if at all possible."

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