

What Nixon Will Give House Probe

Washington

President Nixon has decided to give the House Judiciary Committee all the tapes and documents he submitted to federal grand juries investigating Watergate-related scandals, his lawyers disclosed yesterday.

White House special counsel James D. St. Clair made the announcement at a dramatic and tangled hearing in U.S. District Court here involving all three branches of the government. He said Mr. Nixon would also be willing to respond to questions from the House in writing and then to sit down with several members of the committee for an "oral interview."

St. Clair refused to say, however, whether the President would give the House impeachment inquiry any more documentary evidence than the grand juries got.

Both Watergate special prosecutor Leon Jaworski and the House Judiciary Committee have already asked for more. Committee chairman Peter Rodino (Dem-N.J.) said yesterday afternoon that he would not be satisfied by just the grand jury evidence.

"We've made a request that goes beyond that," Rodino said, warning that a subpoena may still be necessary. "We'll stick by our request."

Speaking to reporters during a recess at the court hearing on the other points in Mr. Nixon's proposal, St. Clair said at first that the President would be willing to submit to the oral interview under oath, but later in the day, the White House lawyer took that back and said this was no part of the President's offer.

At his press conference last night, however, Mr. Nixon said he would be willing to give the personal interview "under oath."

The offer blunted the impact of the court hearing it-

self which U.S. District Court Chief Judge John J. Sirica convened to determine what to do with a secret Watergate grand jury report dealing with the President.

The grand jury asked Siri-

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ca last Friday to send it to the House Judiciary Committee, along with a briefcase evidently crammed with documents.

Watergate prosecutors acknowledged that the President "to some extent" made the submission of the grand jury's secret report to the House committee academic, but they hinted that the report was not confined to material obtained from the White House.

The counsel to the Watergate prosecution force, Philip A. Lacovara, maintained that it was still important to act on the grand jury's request "to the extent there are other items" that it wants to send to the House.

Now that Mr. Nixon has decided to give the House committee all the tapes and documents already produced for the three federal grand juries at work here, Lacovara suggested that the risk of prejudicial publicity stemming from any additional evidence in the secret briefcase would be minimal.

The stiffest objections to sending the grand jury's evidence to Capitol Hill came from the lawyers for former White House aides H. R. (Bob) Haldeman and John D. Ehrlichman, who were supported by attorneys for the five other ex-presidential aides and Nixon campaign advisers indicted last week in the Watergate cover-up.

"The leaks up there are big enough to drive a truck through," charged John S. Wilson, the chief Washington attorney for Haldeman and Ehrlichman. He demanded



AP Wirephoto

JAMES D. ST. CLAIR
White House counsel

that the grand jury report be suppressed before it gets out and jeopardizes the trial of his clients.

Sirica withheld any ruling. At one point during the long hearing, he suggested that the House impeachment inquiry be postponed until completion of the Watergate conspiracy trial, which he said he plans to start September 9, but the proposal was quickly rejected by the Judiciary Committee's lawyers, chief counsel John Doar and minority counsel

Albert Jenner. The impeachment inquiry, they maintained, must come first.

Speaking for the White House, St. Clair said the President would go along with whatever Sirica decides, but was taking no stand at yesterday's hearing because he did not want to be held responsible for the impact the judge's ruling might have on Watergate criminal trials.

In his initial statement St. Clair charged that there has been "a serious breach of jury secrecy" in news stories of the past few days alluding to the contents of the secret report.

He maintained that there

has been "a gross distortion of facts" concerning the two-page grand jury report, or covering letter, which was turned over to Sirica separately last Friday, in addition to the contents of the briefcase. St. Clair read the letter Monday, with Sirica's approval, and informed Mr. Nixon of what it said.

In reading it privately last week, before resealing it, Sirica described the two-page letter as the grand jury's "report and recommendation" but it apparently did little more than express the jury's recommendation that the accompanying evidence be sent to the house.

A long, dry recitation summarizing the Watergate grand jury's evidence concerning Mr. Nixon's involvement in the Watergate scandal was believed to have been contained in a separate document.

A flat recitation — without characterizing the evidence — would be in accord with a general rule that grand juries, in making such presentations, are not supposed to express their opinions "as to the force and effect of evidence" they have compiled.

After registering his protests, St. Clair then told Sirica of Mr. Nixon's decision to give the House committee the 19 tapes and more than 700 documents he has already turned over to the federal grand juries investigating his administration.

Opening up to reporters for the first time, St. Clair said during a recess and again after the hearing that the President's "principal response" to questions raised by the House impeachment inquiry would be contained in sworn written answers to written interrogatories.

St. Clair envisioned an "oral interview" later on at the White House, with Mr. Nixon sitting down alone with a small delegation from the House committee, perhaps just chairman Rodino and Representative Edward Hutchins (Rep-Mich.), the ranking Republican member.

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