

Impeach Probe-- A Liberal Clash

By Joseph Albright
Chronicle Correspondent

Washington, D.C.

In the current act of the Presidential impeachment drama, two Northern California Congressmen find themselves near the center of the stage, performing different roles.

Congressmen Don Edwards (Dem-San Jose) and Jerome Waldie (Dem-Antioch) are usually perceived as men of the same liberal ideology.

But as members of the House Judiciary Committee they have disagreed — albeit politely — on eight roll call votes since the impeachment inquiry began in January.

In the end, both are likely to vote for the President's impeachment. Waldie told *The Chronicle* yesterday that he had decided to vote for impeachment "unless the President comes up with major exculpatory evidence." For his part, Edwards declined to announce how he would vote, but said that the committee had heard "an immensely strong case for impeachment."

The two are approaching this common destination along differing paths.

The latest disagreement between them came last week at two closed caucuses of the 21 Democrats on the Judiciary Committee.

Waldie, along with most of the other Democrats, was passionately in favor of publicly releasing the 50 volumes of documentary evidence which the committee received behind closed doors during the past six weeks.

Edwards, however, spoke up at the caucus for keeping most of the documents secret until after the committee votes on impeachment. "We are like a grand jury, and I have never heard of a grand jury releasing all the evidence before it votes on an indictment," he said later.

Edwards attracted only four other Democrats, all Southerners, to his position. But when added to the 17 Republicans on the committee, his position is expected to prevail — to Waldie's disappointment. As a result, the committee is likely to release only a corrected version of the Presidential transcripts.

Their latest divergence was an outgrowth of disagreements on procedures and timing which go back to January. Among them:

- Waldie was quicker to advocate a contempt of court citation against President Nixon for non-compliance with committee subpoenas.

- Edwards pressed for more leeway for presidential lawyer James St. Clair.

- Waldie wanted open committee sessions to receive impeachment evidence, while Edwards advocated taking evidence in closed sessions, in the manner of a grand jury.

For the most part, Edwards has come out on the winning side of most issues, because he was in agreement with Committee Chairman Peter J. Rodino (Dem-N.J.).

One subject on which Edwards and Waldie agreed is that recent leaks of impeachment evidence have damaged the committee's credibility.

In last week's *Newsweek* Magazine, Waldie was mentioned as one committee member "suspected" of leading documents but Waldie insisted he had never leaked "a single page." Waldie said Rodino assured him that the leaker was someone else. In a separate interview, Edwards said he had not leaked documents, either.

For Waldie, who lost the California gubernatorial primary and is not running for re-election to Congress, the impeachment inquiry is a Last Hurrah. "Under normal circumstances I would probably be very depressed now," he said. "But this inquiry has been so overwhelming in its interest that it has lessened the impact of leaving public life."

However, unless the voters throw him out of office, Edwards will be back here next year.



JEROME WALDIE

DON EDWARDS

They've disagreed on eight roll call votes