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Release Of Tapes Appears To Improve Nixon's Image

PRINCETON, N.J. (AP) — Forty-two per cent of the people who watched, heard or read about President Nixon's televised Watergate speech last week came away with a less favorable opinion of the chief executive than before, according to a special Gallup poll.

Seventeen per cent of those polled said they had a more favorable opinion of Nixon after the speech and subsequent release of the edited Watergate transcripts; 35 per cent said their opinion stayed the same; and 6 per cent said they had no opinion.

The Gallup organization conducted a telephone poll of 694 adults last Thursday. Poll officials said there was a 4 per cent margin of error. The regular Gallup polls are conducted in person and cover a larger sample — usually 1,000 to 1,200 persons.

In a televised address last Monday, Nixon announced he would release edited transcripts of White House tapes sought by the House Judiciary Committee rather than the recordings themselves.

The poll showed 44 per cent of those contacted believe there

is enough evidence for impeachment — trial by the Senate. Forty-one per cent said there was not enough evidence.

At the same time, 49 per cent of those sampled said they did not believe the President's actions were serious enough to warrant his removal from office. Thirty-eight per cent said he should be removed.

The special poll showed 62 per cent of those sampled believe the Judiciary Committee was right in its decision to reject the transcripts as a substitute for the tapes; 24 per cent thought the committee was wrong; and 14 per cent had no opinion.

In answer to the question: "Whose statements about Watergate are you more inclined to believe, John Dean's or President Nixon's?" 38 per cent said they believed Nixon, 36 per cent Dean and 26 per cent no opinion.

Dean, the former White House counsel, has been one of Nixon's chief accusers and presidential spokesmen say the transcripts show up discrepancies and contradictions in his testimony.