

An Impeachment Pool

By John Carmody

The windows are out, NPACT is in and the major TV networks are all jockeying for position in the hallways while the House Judiciary Committee puts off public, televised sessions of its impeachment hearings perhaps until the week of May 27.

So cramped is Room 2141 that networks have knocked out two windows behind the tiered rows of committee chairs and built platform cages some 16 feet off the ground so cameras can peer over congressional shoulders to confront witnesses.

Other camera positions

are still being tested within the hearing room because of the close quarters.

Meanwhile, it is almost sweetness and light between the ABC, CBS AND NBC pool organizers covering the hearings and the National Public Affairs Center for Television (NPACT) here. The latter will tape the daily hearings for use on prime time each night over the Public Broadcasting Service.

NPACT, after charging the others with "restraint of trade" has now been granted full membership in the pool, which helps its financial position somewhat and gives it a full voice in editorial and journalistic de-

isions made by the network bureau chiefs here.

NPACT will not, however, take its turn in the daily rotation of coverage and the three major pool members made sure that the pact, covering the entire impeachment process, will be in no way binding in subsequent pool negotiations when the next big Washington TV story breaks.

Now, all four — NPACT, ABC, CBS and NBC — are jockeying in closed session for the best positions along those crowded Rayburn Office Building hallways for the "unilateral" camera positions where the face-to-face interviews take place.