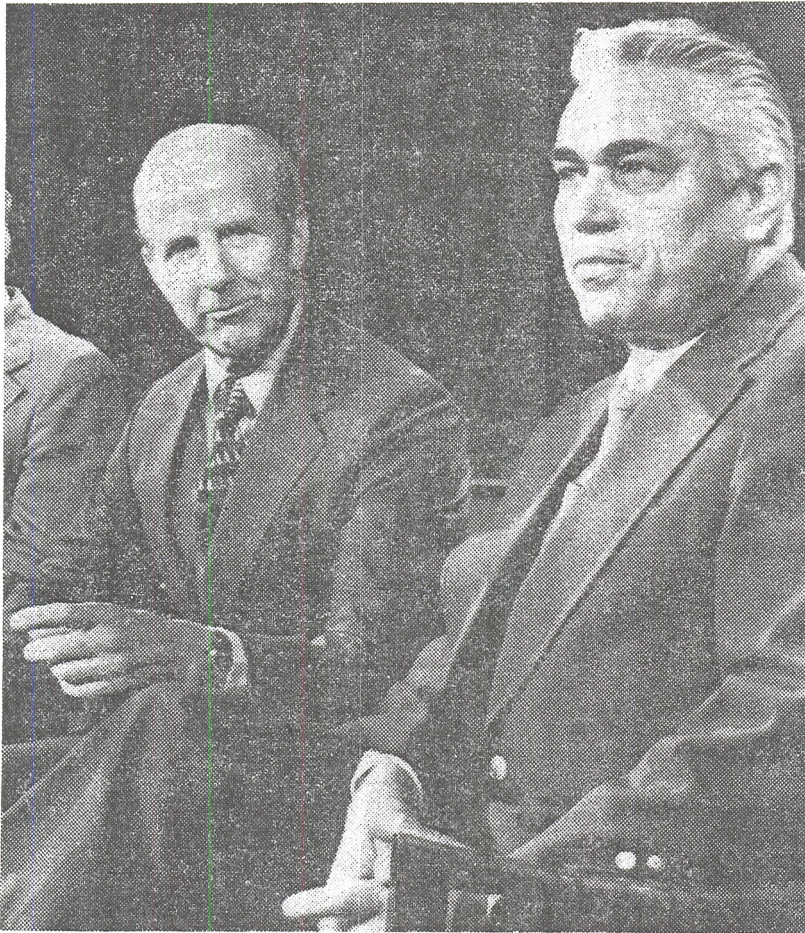


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# Judiciary Members Call Inquiry Fair

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Reps. Robert L. McClory and Charles Wiggins on television panel.

By John Reistrup

Washington Post Staff Writer

A bipartisan panel of House Judiciary Committee members yesterday defended their committee's handling of the impeachment inquiry against President Nixon.

In the face of almost daily charges of bias from Mr. Nixon's aides, Reps. Don Edwards (D-Calif.), Walter Flowers (D-Ala.), Robert McClory (R-Ill.) and Charles E. Wiggins (R-Calif.) generally agreed the inquiry has been fair.

"By and large it has been fair," said Wiggins, regarded as the President's leading defender on the committee. "I have no great quarrel" with the investigation, he said, characterizing it as the most thorough impeachment inquiry ever undertaken and—"up until the last few days"—essentially nonpartisan.

The congressmen appeared jointly on "Issues and Answers" (ABC, WMAL).

White House criticism of the committee has stepped up since special committee counsel John Doar presented the case for impeachment Friday. Today the panel is expected to hear arguments against impeachment from Sam Garrison, deputy counsel for the 17-member Republican minority. And in a series of public meetings beginning Wednesday, the committee will decide whether to recommend impeachment to the full House.

White House press secretary Ronald L. Ziegler said Friday Doar may think he is conducting a "kangaroo court." He accused Doar, committee Chairman Peter W. Rodino Jr. (D-N.J.) and four or five

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others among the panel's 21 Democrats of violating due process and making "a total shambles out of what should have been a fair proceeding."

Ziegler said he hadn't consulted Mr. Nixon directly before making his remarks. But he emphasized he was speaking as the President's official spokesman.

And on Saturday, presidential counselor Dean Burch called the House committee's proceedings "a black spot on jurisprudence."

Wiggins said he didn't attach much weight to Ziegler's remark about a "kangaroo court," although he said the press secretary shouldn't have made it. He called it hyperbole and said it was due to badgering by the press.

But Flowers—regarded as a possible Democratic vote against impeachment—said it was a serious charge.

"This President and his chief administrators . . . have almost flaunted the Congress, have looked upon us not only with disdain, but repudiated us at every turn up to and including yesterday [sic] with the press secretary in San Clemente, Calif., referring to us as a kangaroo court," Flowers said.

Flowers noted, however, that Mr. Nixon's lawyer, James D. St. Clair, has not joined in any charges of unfairness against the committee. Wiggins added it was

"a big jump in logic" to attribute such feelings to the President.

St. Clair flew to San Clemente yesterday to confer with the President. He is to hold a news conference there today.

Asked whether the evidence the committee has turned up is enough to warrant impeachment, Edwards said it was, Wiggins said it

wasn't and the other two said they were having trouble deciding.

Flowers said the key question involved the cover-up of White House involvement in the Watergate break-in and "whether or not the President took care that the laws were faithfully executed," as required by the Constitution.

McClory said he found the question of the President's role in the Watergate cover-

up "one of the less convincing aspects of the case. I think it is very muddled.

More important, he said, is a pattern of criminal activity on the part of people surrounding Mr. Nixon—which "impinges very closely" on whether the President is taking care to see that the laws are faithfully executed.

McClory said a second crucial question is the President's defiance of committee subpoenas for evidence.

McClory, who last week circulated a petition among\* Republican committee members that resulted in Sam Garrison being in charge of preparing the anti-impeachment case for the Republicans, said minority counsel Albert E. Jenner Jr., had taken a pro-impeachment line that was "out of tune" with the GOP members.

"Bert Jenner has seemed to have forgotten who his client is in this case," Wiggins added. "It is the minority."

McClory said Jenner will stay on as associate committee counsel.

In San Clemente, meanwhile, Ziegler kept up his criticism of the committee's investigation.

Evidence presented by Doar and Jenner amounts to "surmise and conjecture compiled over the last two years by hundreds upon hundreds of mostly partisan investigators," he said.