

NY Times AUG 2 1974
**House Impeachment Numbers Game:
First You Take 248, Subtract 187 . . .**

By R. W. APPLE Jr.

Special to The New York Times

WASHINGTON, Aug. 1—Everybody had a number but nobody had a count today in the House of Representatives.

Because they are loath to do anything that might be construed as arm-twisting on so sensitive a question, neither the Republican nor the Democratic leadership has yet made a formal count on probable votes on impeachment.

But nothing so piffling as a lack of facts can still the engines of speculation on Capitol Hill, so today's game—in the Speaker's lobby, in the corridors and offices and restaurants—was the numbers game.

All the players seemed to agree on one thing: The only question worth arguing was the number of votes by which President Nixon would be impeached. No one was even murmuring that Mr. Nixon might pull out a victory.

The rules are simplicity itself. You start with the Democrats' numerical advantage in the House (248 seats minus 187 equals 61), then add the number of Republicans favoring impeachment and subtract the number of Democrats opposing it.

Two weeks ago the prevailing wisdom said that only 30 or 35 Republicans were likely to desert their President. But that was before the House Judiciary Committee acted, and before the numerologists hit their stride.

The 'Respectable' Move

Today the range was from 50 up. Representative John E. Anderson of Illinois, the widely respected chairman of the House Republican conference, said 50. Representative Edward G. Biesick Jr., Republican of Pennsylvania, said 60—and suggested that the number would grow "because voting against the President has become very respectable."

Representative Albert H. Quie, an eight-term moderate Republican from Minnesota, said he thought there would be 10 Republican votes on the floor for every Republican vote in the committee supporting impeachment. So he was guessing 70.

Jumping Ship

And Representative John H. Rousselot of California, a member of the John Birch Society, was reported to have

said 80. That intrigued everybody, because Mr. Rousselot is well connected among Republican conservatives, and the scuttlebutt had the conservatives jumping ship.

Among the Democrats, the number of Nixon supporters was shrinking—or at least the estimates were shrinking. Representative Walter Flowers of Alabama said he thought about two dozen Southern Democrats would stick with the President, and Representative Joe D. Waggoner Jr. of Louisiana was said to have estimated privately that only 38 Democrats would stay with him.

Mr. Waggoner is one of the House's most fervent Nixonites, so his estimate was taken as an evil omen indeed for the President.

Using Mr. Waggoner's figure and averaging the Republican estimates, a visitor guessed that Mr. Nixon stood to lose by about 90 votes—162, if everyone voted, by 273 to 162.

But there were broad-brush artists at work on Capitol Hill, too. Some were talking of a two-to-one majority (roughly 290 to 145) and others, with a certain air of mystery, about "300-plus" votes for impeachment. Like most soothsayers, they declined to explain their calculations.

Note: If the House voted in the same ratio (28-10) as the Judiciary Committee did on the second article, Mr. Nixon would be impeached by 320 votes to 115.

For those who tired of the numbers game, there was other action—guessing which way the minority leader, Representative John J. Rhodes, Republican of Arizona, would jump at a news conference next Monday. A Democratic Representative bet his dubious administrative assistant \$5 that Mr. Rhodes would support the President.

Melvin R. Laird, the former Defense Secretary and former Representative, said that he expected Mr. Nixon's prospects to perk up once more before the House votes.

A head-counter of some repute in Washington, Mr. Laird implied that he thought the upturn would be too little too late, and that Mr. Nixon would lose.

A Democratic savant, speaking with a cloak of anonymity, demurred. The climactic event in the House phase of the impeachment process oc-

curred, he argued, when the Judiciary Committee made its decision.

"This place is the creature of its committees," he said. "When Ways and Means works for months on some complicated question, most of the members tend to follow its lead. More than you think, it will be the same with impeachment. It's too late for the President to rally."

One of the first questions to be decided if the House votes to impeach will be the make-up of the team of "managers" or prosecutors for the Senate trial.

It is all but certain that Representative Peter W. Rodino Jr., Democrat of New Jersey, the committee chairman, will be one of the managers. He is expected to have the strongest voice in selecting the group, although the Democratic leadership will have its say, too.

John M. Doar and Albert W. Jenner Jr. will probably be asked to serve as the managers' main counsels.

Too Much Catching Up

From there on, the situation gets a bit murky, but the tentative discussions envisage a group of five or seven. Because of the complexity of the case, all are likely to be drawn from the committee membership; to pick an outsider, like Mr. Anderson, for example, would require him to do an enormous amount of catching up.

Some members have already said "no," including Representatives Tom Railsback, Republican of Illinois, and Don Edwards, Democrat of California. Two are reported to be seeking the job: Representatives Lawrence J. Hogan, Republican of Maryland, who could use the exposure in his campaign for Governor, and Jerome R. Waldie, Democrat of California, who could conclude his Congressional career (he is retiring) on a high note.

But the best bets, according to those who have been batting around names, are those with special qualifications for the task.

Among these are Representatives James R. Mann, Democrat of South Carolina (eloquence, conservatism, prosecutorial experience); Paul S. Sarbanes, Democrat of Maryland (legal skill, unflappability); Robert McClory, Republican of Illinois (party, seniority, influence).