

WORKING OUT THE GROUND RULES

When the House of Representatives opens for business on the morning of Aug. 19, House Chaplain Edward G. Latch will offer up the usual prayer—but it will get more than the usual attention. Barring the unforeseen, the day's business, and that of the next 87 hours in the House, will be the impeachment of the President of the United States. Last week, Congressional leaders in both houses were busy planning the proceedings on the House floor and the Senate trial that would follow.

Many key details must still be formally resolved. The House Rules Committee, when it meets next week, will probably order that no changes will be permitted in the wording of

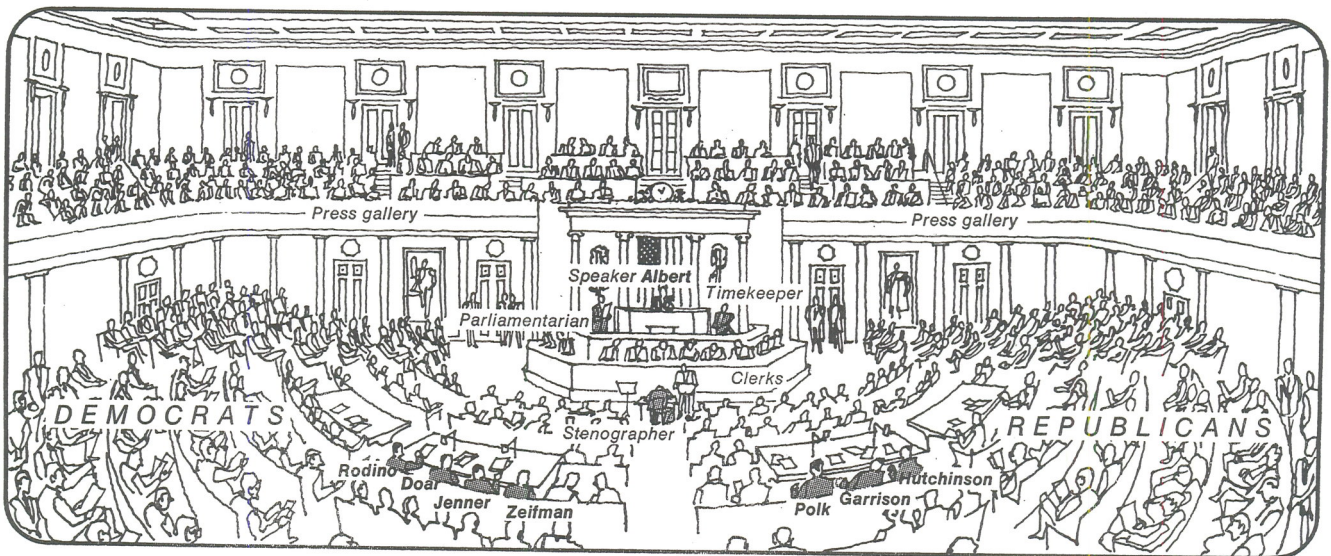
dino and Edward Hutchinson, the ranking minority leader, will be sitting. Advising Rodino will be impeachment counsels John Doar and Albert Jenner, who prepared the case, plus the Judiciary Committee's permanent counsel, Jerome Zeifman. Beside Hutchinson will be GOP counsel Samuel Garrison and Zeifman's Republican counterpart, Franklin Polk. But Presidential counsel James D. St. Clair will be conspicuously absent—barred from the proceedings on the ground that he represents Mr. Nixon, not the Republican minority.

The general debate, which will take up 55 hours, is to be evenly divided between backers and opponents of impeachment, and Rodino and

their new electronic voting system, the members will answer "aye" or "no" in three long roll calls.

If any of the articles carries, two members of the House—most likely, Rodino and one other pro-impeachment representative—would deliver them to the Senate chamber. "Mr. President," Rodino would declare, "... in the name of the House of Representatives and of all the people of the United States, we do impeach Richard M. Nixon, the President of the United States, of high crimes and misdemeanors in office..."

Within two days, the Senate would open debate on impeachment procedures—a matter that Senate leaders hope could be largely resolved beforehand. The day after that debate ends, the bill's managers from the House could cross over to the Senate



The House floor: In a historic debate, the cameras would focus on three scenes

the articles when they reach the floor—although full paragraphs can be dropped. The Senate, which is already gearing up in expectation that impeachment will pass the House, must decide such questions as whether Chief Justice Warren Burger, who will preside over the trial, will be allowed to cast tie-breaking votes on procedural matters. The only previous Presidential impeachment offers few precedents. "That was a bonfire impeachment," Rules Committee chairman Ray J. Madden mused. "The articles were thrown on the floor of the House, fist fights broke out on the floor and it was an awful mess."

If planning can make it so, this impeachment will go more smoothly. As the great debate unfolds, TV cameras will be focusing on the rostrum, where the Speaker and the House clerks sit, and the leaders' tables, where the bill's managers, Judiciary Committee chairman Peter W. Ro-

Hutchinson will have full authority to select speakers to make or break the case against the President. After the general debate, the articles of impeachment will be taken up in detail under a parliamentary device known as "motions to strike." Selected speakers will discuss—but probably not amend—each of the fourteen subparagraphs in the articles, and the House will then vote whether to retain each paragraph in the bill.

Censure? One proposal left unresolved was an added step after the debate: some Republicans want the option of introducing a motion to send the bill back to the Judiciary Committee, with instructions to substitute a measure merely censuring the President. By current calculations, any such move would be handily defeated. And with the end of the debate will come a moment of high drama: the final vote on each of the three articles of impeachment. Forsaking

chamber, where Rodino would formally read out the articles of impeachment. Promptly at 1 p.m. the next day, Chief Justice Burger would ascend the chair of the Senate president and administer an oath of impartiality to the senators gathered before him. With that, the Senate would issue a summons to the President, returnable by Mr. Nixon or his counsel, and Justice Berger would set a date for proceedings to begin. At that point, Mr. Nixon would be granted time—probably two to three weeks—to prepare his case.

Then, on the appointed day, the sergeant at arms would proclaim, "Hear ye, hear ye! All persons are commanded to keep silence, on pain of imprisonment, while the House of Representatives is exhibiting to the Senate of the United States articles of impeachment against Richard M. Nixon..." And the trial of the President of the United States would begin.