

GOP Losses Move To Speed Decision On Impeachment

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A Republican push to accelerate House Judiciary Committee consideration of the possible impeachment of President Nixon sputtered out yesterday in a swamp of inconclusive talk.

After a 90-minute informal session in the committee room, Chairman Peter W. Rodino (D-N.J.) said there was "no consensus" on any immediate steps to speed up the proceedings.

Republican members of Judiciary urged the chairman to create a special nine-man subcommittee to oversee the preliminary phases of the investigation. Rodino told newsmen he did not believe "these matters should be finalized" until he has picked a special counsel to head the study.

He promised to name that key staff member before Congress adjourns for Christmas, but indicated he would not move to set up a special panel to handle the impeachment investigation until it reconvenes in late January.

Rep. Thomas F. Railsback (R-Ill.), a committee member, suggested that Judiciary be called back into session in early January and that its members spend the month sifting the evidence on which any impeachment action would rest.

Railsback said that timetable would permit the special subcommittee to report its findings by early February. The full committee could, if it were so inclined, bring an

impeachment resolution to the floor of the House by early March, he said.

But Rodino said, "I don't think that would be feasible," and told newsmen that he did not expect the staff work to be far enough advanced for any work by committee members to begin before Congress returns at the end of January.

The chairman introduced a new suggestion yesterday by proposing that an "advisory committee" of three academic authorities be named to assist the committee on constitutional questions of impeachment.

Rodino said a committee staff study of previous impeachment proceedings had found no standardized rules of procedure and no clear precedents on major rules questions.

Aides said the staff was now going through the past cases, listing all the procedural rulings that had been made that might be relevant to this situation.

Members of the committee said the morning discussion, which was ended by a series of floor votes on the trade bill, produced general agreement on the desirability of creating a smaller subcommittee of some size to manage the proceedings.

Rodino said he thought there was "consensus that 38 people (the size of the full committee) is too large."

But he said he wanted more discussion before rec-

ommending the size or the makeup of the special subcommittee. There is considerable disagreement among the members as to whether strict seniority should be applied in choosing its membership and Rodino emphasized "it is not my feeling at all" that should necessarily be the case.

Still to be determined is the question whether any hearings held by the subcommittee or the full committee would be open to the public. Railsback argued in yesterday's session that if any testimony is taken in public, the President should have a right to be represented by counsel and his attorneys should have the opportunity to cross-examine adverse witnesses.

Committee aides said there is a possibility the committee may meet once more before Congress adjourns and continue its discussion of the impeachment procedures.

The Judiciary Committee was given jurisdiction over the impeachment matter in late October and was voted \$1 million by the House on Nov. 15 to conduct its investigation.