

MILLS BIDS NIXON WEIGH RESIGNING

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He Suggests Move if House
Unit Asks Impeachment

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WASHINGTON, Jan. 18 —

Representative Wilbur D. Mills of Arkansas, a conservative Democrat, said today that President Nixon should not put the country through a prolonged procedure over his removal from office but should consider resigning if the House Judiciary Committee recommended his impeachment.

Mr. Mills, whose over-all views are much closer to Mr. Nixon's than those of most Democrats, said he was not recommending impeachment or resignation at this time.

But he said that if the committee recommended impeachment "I think it would be much better for the President to consider resigning rather than put the country into the greatest schism since the Civil War."

Mr. Mills made his remarks at an impromptu news conference.

Interview With Reuters

He spoke to a large group of reporters who gathered in his office following distribution of an interview with him by the Reuters news agency, which quoted him as calling for Mr. Nixon's resignation now.

Mr. Mills did not, in his interview with the other reporters, demand Mr. Nixon's resignation and it was not clear whether he had been misunderstood the first time or had backed down after seeing the excitement that the report by Reuters had caused.

Mr. Mills is one of the most influential members of the House of Representatives, at least in the legislative areas such as taxation over which his Ways and Means Committee has jurisdiction. He is chairman of the committee.

While Mr. Mills would not call for Mr. Nixon's resignation at this time, he did express the view that if Vice President Ford became President he "could get a greater degree of acceptance of hard decisions that have to be made in the next several months."

Mr. Mills also said that he would favor legislation that would grant Mr. Nixon immunity from prosecution, once he left office, for any crimes he might have been involved in as President. There has been informal discussion of such legislation among members of Congress, but no such bill has been introduced, and Mr. Mills was the first major political figure to endorse the idea.

Mr. Mills said that he had not yet seen enough evidence to convince him that Mr. Nixon was guilty of "high crimes and misdemeanors"—the impeach-

able offenses described by the Constitution.

His own constituents, Mr. Mills said, "express more irritation over the President's income tax payments than anything else." Mr. Mills also heads the Joint Committee on Internal Revenue Taxation, which is examining the President's tax returns. He said he thought the committee would complete its work by about April.