

Data Letter Sent By House Judiciary

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The House Judiciary Committee has sent its first letter to the White House seeking information for its impeachment inquiry of President Nixon.

Special counsel John Doar sent a letter Monday to James D. St. Clair, the President's chief legal adviser. It reportedly requested many of the 700 documents and 17 tapes that the White House has turned over voluntarily to Watergate Special Prosecutor Leon Jaworski.

With speculation existing as to whether the White House intends to cooperate with the House committee, this first request covers familiar ground—materials already given Jaworski for grand jury presentation.

Doar is expected to make additional requests, and the White House may object at that point that the information sought is not relevant or does not deal with St. Clair's concept that an impeachable offense must be a crime. The committee staff, in a report last week, took the position that an impeachable offense need not be an indictable one if it shows gross abuse of office.

Reaction of committee members was mixed to Mr. Nixon's Monday evening news conference remarks, in which he repeated his qualified promise of cooperation and passed on his lawyers' opinion that a criminal offense is the requirement for impeachment of a President.

At least four of the committee's 17 Republicans—Robert McClory (Ill.), Tom Railsback (Ill.), Lawrence Hogan (Md.)

and William Cohen (Maine)—expressed the belief that impeachable offenses need not be criminal.

McClory said he hoped that the White House, despite its limited concept of the definition of impeachable offenses, would make available to the committee material relating to non-criminal offenses which the President has been accused of by some congressmen. Impeachment allegations against Mr. Nixon range from the Watergate break-in and cover-up to impoundment of appropriated funds.

Rep. Edward Hutchinson (R-Mich.), senior Republican on the committee, said he thinks the committee "will be getting what we want from the White House."

Rep. Charles Wiggins (R-Calif.) agreed, saying the President "is a student of history and knows that Andrew Johnson wasn't in any trouble until he told Congress to stick it in their ear." In 1868, Johnson became the first and only President impeached by the House. The Senate failed by one vote to muster the two-thirds necessary to remove him from office.

One of the constitutional experts whom Mr. Nixon said the White House was consulting on its brief for the House committee on the definition of impeachable offenses is Charles Alan Wright, University of Texas law professor who was on the President's legal team last summer. Wright said he has prepared a nine-page memo and was sending it to the White House.