

St. Clair Says President Will Submit to Questions

By ANTHONY RIPLEY

Special to The New York Times

WASHINGTON, March 6—President Nixon has agreed to turn over to the House committee considering impeachment all the documents and tape recordings that the White House has sent to the special prosecutor, Leon Jaworski, the President's lawyer, James D. St. Clair, said today.

In addition, Mr. St. Clair said, the President is willing to submit to written questions from the House Judiciary Committee and, if needed, to an "interview" by a small number of committee members at the White House.

In his news conference tonight, Mr. Nixon called it a "very forthcoming offer" and said, speaking of himself in the third person, "The President will be glad to meet with members of the committee, under oath."

He said that such a meeting would be with Representative Peter W. Rodino Jr., Democrat of New Jersey, who is chairman of the Judiciary Committee, and Representative Edward Hutchinson of Michigan, ranking Republican on the Committee.

"It is a goal for all of us," he said, "to get a prompt conclusion to this matter as soon as possible."

Among the material to be released to the committee, according to Mr. Nixon, are 19 tape recordings and about 700 pages of documents.

The President said that Mr. Jaworski had said that all the material needed to conclude the Watergate investigation was in hand. However, Mr. Jaworski has said that although he can bring indictments, further materials will still be needed from the White House.

Uncertainty about the acceptability of President Nixon's response to the request for information stems from the fact

Continued From Page 1, Col. 6

that there are instances of overlap in the following areas:

The special prosecutor did not receive all the information that he had requested from the White House, and among the 700 pages of documents and 17 tapes that he did receive are some the committee does not feel it needs.

In letters sent to the White House last week by the impeachment inquiry staff, documents and information were requested that had not been requested by or provided to the special prosecutor.

There are indications that the Watergate grand jury's secret report, which is still in the Federal District Court, contains information that the impeachment inquiry has not requested but that the grand jury feels should be directed to its attention.

Similar Nixon offers to meet with the two senior members of the Senate Watergate committee and with Mr. Jaworski for such "interviews" as those agreed to today have been made by the President in the past.

Mr. St. Clair said today's offer did not represent a change in "attitude or policy." Rather, he said, there is a change "in circumstances."

"The grand jury has spoken," he said in describing that change. "The whole focus is changing from a secret investigation by a grand jury to a House investigation."

Mr. St. Clair's announcement about the documents and possible questioning by House Judiciary Committee members came at an unusual hearing called by Chief Judge John J. Sirica in United States District Court. His other remarks about the changed circumstances came in an impromptu news conference held in the courtroom when the hearing was over.

Distortion Charged

The subject of today's court action was what to do with the secret report and briefcase filled with documents, handed to the judge last Friday by one of the Watergate grand juries, that are believed to contain material dealing with Mr. Nixon's possible role in a cover-up of the burglary in the Watergate office building.

Mr. St. Clair complained that there was "a gross distortion"

of the facts in the public press" about the secret report, but that the White House would take no position about what should be done with the report.

"We leave the matter in your hands," he told the judge.

On the subject of the briefcase, he said that the court had a more difficult job weighing "conflicting interests." But he said that it might be helpful for the court, in deciding what to do, to be aware of Mr. Nixon's current position.

"The President is prepared to turn over to the House committee all the material he furnished to the grand jury without limitation, and he will submit to written interrogatories and oral interviews, if desired," Mr. St. Clair said.

Lawyers for the seven men indicted last Friday in the "Watergate cover-up case" all opposed turning over the report and briefcase. All argued that that might create prejudicial pretrial publicity for their clients.

If the material goes to Congress, argued John J. Wilson, lawyer for H.R. Haldeman and John D. Ehrlichman, both former top White House aides, it would get out to the press.

"Leaks up there are big enough to drive a truck through," he told Judge Sirica.

Jury's Action Questioned

Jacob A. Stein, lawyer for Kenneth Wells Parkinson, who served as a lawyer for the Committee for the Re-election of the President, said that the information would be thrown into "a vortex that is well-nigh uncontrollable."

Several of the defense lawyers also argued that a grand jury legally had no business issuing reports.

John M. Doar and Albert E. Jenner Jr., the chief counsel and minority counsel, respectively for the House Judiciary Committee, said that the secret report and briefcase of documents had been requested by the committee.

Mr. Doar said that he could not guarantee against leaks, but that access would be limited under strict rules.

Judge Sirica called the situation unprecedented and asked Mr. Doar if the impeachment action could not be delayed until after the trial which, he said, is set for Sept. 9.

Mr. Doar replied that the House had taken no position on waiting, but that it had an "overriding" duty and authority to look into impeachment.

Mr. St. Clair said that the President "would not be interested in delaying the impeachment process," and that on that subject "Mr. Doar and I stand together."

Mr. Jenner said that the

committee "needs, requires and requests" the documents and the secret report "to preserve the overriding, dominant duty fixed in the Constitution of the United States."

Although individual rights must be protected, he said, the impeachment investigation is an overriding question. He added that the source of the report and how it got to the court were irrelevant to the House.

Backs Court's Power

Philip A. Lacovara, counsel for the special prosecutor, argued that the court had the power to receive the special report and briefcase and should "exercise its powers and discretion to grant the grand jury's request."

That request, though formally not stated, was apparently to turn the information over to the House.

"It would be unthinkable in our system of Government for this court to hold that this grand jury must remain mute when it has evidence which seems to bear on this matter," Mr. Lacovara said.

He said of the President's offer of documents that it "may not be co-terminal" with the contents of the report and briefcase. The question of pretrial publicity, added, he is premature.

Judge Sirica said that he would take the matter under advisement. There was no indication how long his study might take before a decision was reached on the secret report and briefcase.

Response to the White House offer shifted during the day as details of the offer became clear. Representative Robert McClory of Illinois, second ranking minority member of the Judiciary Committee, at first expressed his "pleasure" with the White House offer. Later in the afternoon, however, he said:

"I just don't like qualifications and delays and special arrangements. I would rather they just responded to the requests we made and deliver the specific items. That would include the three or four items requested that had not been turned over to the special prosecutor. Why doesn't he just furnish those and forget about written interrogatories and interviews at the White House?"

The chairman of the Judiciary Committee, Peter W. Rodino Jr., New Jersey Democrat, has scheduled a meeting of the committee for 10 a.m. tomorrow to discuss two letters he received today from the White House in response to the committee's request for information.

Continued on Page 34, Column 1