

The Priority of Impeaching

Washington

Two House Judiciary Committee members said yesterday a speedy and unrestricted impeachment inquiry is more important than courtroom justice in the Watergate cases.

Representative Robert Kastenmeier (D-N.Y.) said the committee's impeachment inquiry must get all necessary evidence even in cases where obtaining that evidence destroys chances of prosecuting a Watergate defendant.

Representative Robert McClory (Rep-D) said the impeachment inquiry should not be postponed until the Watergate trials are completed, a suggestion made by Watergate Judge John J. Sirica.

Both men appearing on ABC-TV's "Issues and Answers," said the House committee will subpoena President Nixon if necessary for six tape recordings he has so far refused to hand over.

In response to questions, both men said they felt the impeachment proceeding takes precedence over Watergate court actions and cannot be bridled by the judicial branch.

"I still say the impeachment inquiry is most important," Kastenmeier said.

"The public interest and the Constitution. I think presume this to be a superior matter for the republic.

"Accordingly, even if it comes to pass that the (Watergate) prosecutions fail, nonetheless, that potential result must be a risk we're willing to assume in connection with the resolution of the impeachment inquiry."

Two Watergate grand ju

ries have indicted a total of seven former top-ranking Nixon advisers on Watergate-related charges over the past ten days. The seven, including former Attorney General John N. Mitchell and former Nixon advisers H. R. Haldeman and

John D. Ehrlichman, pleaded innocent Saturday to all charges.

McClory said impeachment takes precedence over judicial matters, disagreeing with Sirica's suggestion that the inquiry should be postponed until after the

trials and even questioning Sirica's right to hold a secret Watergate grand jury report the committee wants.

"It seems to me we do have a processing which supercedes the judicial proceeding or any other action that's being taken in the country," he said. "And particularly it seems to me much more important to get on with this impeachment inquiry than it is to defer to the court or delay until court proceedings are over."

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