

FORD CRITICIZES HOUSE UNIT STAFF

Asserts Members Seem to Be Attempting to 'Dictate' Impeachment Moves

By MARIORIE HINTER

CHARLESTON, S.C., March 15—Vice President Ford said today that the staff of the House Judiciary Committee appeared to be seeking to "dictate proceedings" involving impeachment of President Nixon.

"If I were a member of the Committee on Judiciary, I would start corralling the staff and saying, 'You work for us, you aren't telling us how the impeachment proceedings should go ahead,'" the Vice President said.

His criticism of the Judiciary Committee staff came in response to questions at a news conference early this afternoon on the campus of the Citadel, a military college here in Charleston.

It was his most vigorous defense of President Nixon since the beginning of the conflict between the White House and the Judiciary Committee over tapes and other material sought by the panel.

Asked if he felt that both the majority and minority members of the staff were attempting to dictate the scope of the proceedings, he replied, "I spoke of the staff and I include all of them."

Members Irritated

Judiciary Committee members, Republicans as well as Democrats, have expressed irritation in recent days over White House refusal to supply the panel with certain materials. Some have suggested that the White House is seeking to limit the scope of the hearings.

Today, Mr. Ford said that he did not think that either the White House or members of the committee were trying to dictate impeachment proceedings.

"What worries me more than anything is that the staff of the Judiciary Committee may be wanting to dictate the impeachment proceedings," he said. "In my judgment, the White House and the committee members could get together on reasonable lines. But I don't think the staff should run the proceedings for the committee or the President or the American people."

He said it was his impression that the staff was "having too big an influence."

The Vice President noted that he had served on Congressional committees for many years and that he had found "a tendency in the Congress and otherwise—because members of both the House and the Senate are so busy—to allow their staffs to take over," adding that "members become captives of their employes."

In response to another question, the Vice President said that he was confident that the President would not resign even if his continuance in office meant Democratic Congressional sweeps in the fall elections.

"I do not think the President will resign under any circumstances that I can possibly foresee," he said. "He's got a job to do, and he's going to stay on that job."