

Nixon Jury Data Opened By Rodino and Hutchinson

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WASHINGTON, March 27—Two senior members of the House impeachment inquiry began examining grand jury evidence today on President Nixon's role in the Watergate scandal.

The Judiciary Committee chairman, Peter W. Rodino Jr., Democrat of New Jersey, and Representative Edward Hutchinson of Michigan, ranking Republican on the committee, spent three hours this morning reading documents and testimony and listening to several tape recordings.

Both later described the material as relevant to their inquiry but refused further to characterize the evidence put together by the Federal grand jury in its 21-month investigation into the Watergate burglary and subsequent attempts to cover the affair.

The material, a briefcase full of documents and tapes, was turned over to the committee yesterday by the Federal District Court.

Informal Reports to Panel

Each of the two committee leaders later gave brief, informal reports to other members of the 38-member committee but, apparently, revealed no details to them. Mr. Rodino said it would take much more time to examine all the material. He said that no decision had been made on when other committee members would receive detailed briefings on the still-secret evidence.

The inquiry staff's top lawyers, John M. Doar and Albert E. Jenner Jr., continued their examination of the material in an effort to correlate it with other evidence gathered by the inquiry. This includes the records of the Senate Watergate committee and some 19 tapes and 700 pages of documents obtained from the White House earlier.

Representative Robert F. Drinan, Massachusetts Democrat who is a member of the Judiciary Committee, said that despite news reports to the contrary he had been assured that the inquiry had "not dropped any areas from its investigation."

Recent reports indicated that, perhaps as part of a compromise with the White House, the in-

quiry would cease investigation of such matters as the dismantling of the Office of Economic Opportunity or the Cambodian bombing and other matters.

"Mr. Doar assured me that nothing has been dropped," Mr. Drinan said, "and that the committee would be informed of any recommendation that a specific area of inquiry appeared unnecessary."

Mr. Drinan's statement came as Senator Harold E. Hughes, Iowa Democrat, said in a Senate speech that the investigation by the Senate Armed Services Committee, to which he belongs, had uncovered "clear violations of the law" in connection with the use of American troops and bombing in Cambodia in 1970-73.

The evidence, which he said would be turned over to the impeachment inquiry suggests violations of two laws that prohibited use of American ground troops in Cambodia and Laos.

Also today, the Assistant Senate Democratic leader, Robert C. Byrd, of West Virginia, charged that President Nixon was engaged in an attempt to sabotage the impeachment inquiry.

In a luncheon speech to the National Capital Democratic Club, Senator Byrd said the President had virtually commandeered the electronic media to "launch subtle, but sustained and unjustified attacks upon the legislative branch."

It was, he said, "a strategy that can only mislead the people, and it is calculated to sabotage the legitimate and constitutional impeachment inquiry by the House of Representatives, and avoid the disaster of a possible trial and conviction by the Senate."

Senator Byrd's charges that the President was involved in a public campaign against Congress recalled to many observers of the impeachment process similar charges made against President Andrew Johnson.

One of the 10 articles of impeachment brought against Johnson was that he had embarked on a campaign to "bring into disgrace, ridicule, hatred and contempt the Congress of the United States."

Concerning the grand jury



Associated Press

Senator Robert C. Byrd, West Virginia Democrat, as he accused the President of making unjustified attacks on legislators.

evidence reviewed today, Mr. Rodino and Mr. Hutchinson agreed that the few tapes they listened to were of varying quality.

Some portions, Mr. Hutchinson said, were "very poor" while other portions were "good."

While he refused to identify voices on the tapes, Mr. Hutchinson said he had been able to identify voices and follow conversations because of the aid of typed transcripts that accompany the tapes. Both men refused to comment on whether the tapes they heard contained gaps or missing portions.

The condition of White House tapes was called into question again yesterday when Federal District Judge John J. Sirica raised the possibility of a grand jury report on the work of a panel of experts analyzing tapes received by grand juries from the White House.

Although he made no prediction, Judge Sirica said the panel would report to him on its examination of the tapes and then added: "Should there be anything in the nature of a grand jury report on the matter," it would be handled by Federal District Judge George L. Hart Jr. who recently succeeded Mr. Sirica as Chief Judge of the court.