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# Democrats to Let St. Clair Observe Inquiry on Nixon

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WASHINGTON, April 9—The Democratic majority on the House Judiciary Committee has informally agreed to support at least a limited role in the impeachment inquiry for the President's counsel, James D. St. Clair.

Although there was no formal poll of the 21 Democrats on the 38-member committee, members reported after a caucus this morning that a consensus appeared to have formed around a proposal to allow Mr. St. Clair to sit in as an observer in sessions at which the evidence on President Nixon's conduct in office is presented to the committee.

If formally adopted by the committee, the proposal could prevent any widening of a partisan split that has been developing over the last few days as Democrats and Republicans on the committee debated the President's right of representation.

Representative Robert McClory, Republican of Illinois, who is the most vocal critic of the committee Democrats for their refusal to define clearly a role for the President's lawyer, said he thought the proposal was a very good one.

A spokesman for Mr. McClory said he had discussed the matter with the committee chairman, Representative Peter W. Rodino, Democrat of New Jersey, and had concluded that

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"things seem to be moving along pretty well."

As described by Mr. McClory's office, and confirmed by Democrats attending the caucus this morning, Mr. St. Clair will be invited to sit in on the initial sessions at which members will be given an overview of the allegations against Mr. Nixon and the evidence to support or refute those allegations. He would not, according to most of those who attended today's caucus, be allowed to participate in the presentation.

#### An Important Concession

The concession—should it formally be adopted—is a important one. Other than members of the committee, no one is allowed in such proceedings except at the invitation of the members. If Mr. St. Clair is allowed to sit in on the initial presentation of the evidence,

he will have a complete view of the nature of the evidence that Congress has accumulated to support the charges made against the President over the last several months.

Although Mr. St. Clair's initial involvement in the process may be settled at the committee's next meeting, the full extent of his involvement may not be decided until later. Mr. Rodino and most members of the impeachment inquiry staff are advising members not to determine the final rules of their proceedings until after the initial hearings on evidence.

Should that advice be followed, committee members could decide on a further role for Mr. St. Clair later in the inquiry.

#### Doar Outlines Schedule

As outlined by the chief counsel to the inquiry staff, John M. Doar, at today's Democratic caucus, the tentative schedule for the hearings would begin May 7 when Mr. Doar and other staff members will present to the full committee an general view of the 53 areas of inquiry and the facts supporting or refuting those charges involved.

The presentation will be annotated to refer to testimony, statements, documents and tapes supporting those facts. It has yet to be decided if this briefing, expected to last five to seven days, will be open or secret.

After the presentation of evidence committee members will be allowed up to two weeks to examine the documents and tapes. Then the committee will face such questions as whether to hold public hearings to examine witnesses before considering articles of impeachment.