

GOP Sent Warning To Nixon

By Saul Kohler

Newhouse News Service

The Republican leadership of the Senate has issued a unanimous warning to President Nixon that, unless he produces promptly all materials being sought by the House Judiciary Committee, he is "aching for impeachment."

The leadership split openly with White House policy at a meeting with presidential assistant Dean Burch late Tuesday, it was learned, and told Burch to warn the President that "the first article in the bill of impeachment very well could be contempt of Congress."

Burch requested the meeting to submit to the Senate leadership a proposed White House response to the latest request from the Judiciary Committee. The first draft of the letter was rejected by the Senate leaders and a second draft, more conciliatory, was sent by Presidential Counsel James St. Clair to John Doar, counsel to the Judiciary Committee.

Burch is reported to have told the Republicans that the White House is having difficulty transcribing the tapes, because of the volume and poor quality of the recordings. Review of the tapes is being done by White House Counsel J. Fred Buzhardt, Burch said.

"If this is the bottleneck, then the White House had better assign more people," the leadership told Burch. "If you continue to delay, you are aching for impeachment."

"If you go very much further, the first article in a bill of impeachment well could be contempt of Congress."

The Judiciary Committee, headed by Rep. Peter W. Rodino Jr. (D-N.J.), voted yesterday to subpoena the tapes.

In the letter, which was delivered to Doar Tuesday 90 minutes after the committee-set deadline for a White House response, St. Clair said that some of the material re-

LETTER, From A1

quested by the committee, and judged relevant by the President, would be turned over following the congressional Easter recess ending April 22.

This rankled Senate leaders who feel that it is for Congress, and not the President, to decide what is relevant in the impeachment investigation.

Four of the six Senate Republican leaders are former members of the House of Representatives. It is the House which must impeach the President. If it does, he would be tried before the Senate.

Participating in the meeting with Burch were Republican Leader Hugh Scott of Pennsylvania, Republican Whip Robert Griffin of Michigan, Policy

Chairman John Tower of Texas, Conference Chairman Norris Cotton of New Hampshire, Conference Secretary Wallace Bennett of Utah, and Senate GOP Campaign Chairman William Brock of Tennessee.

Over the weekend drafts and sections of drafts of the White House response were read to Scott and other GOP leaders over the telephone by Burch, White House Counselor Bryce Harlow and White House Chief of Staff Gen. Alexander Haig.

The leaders were reported to have rejected the submissions as delaying tactics, and at 4:30 p.m. Tuesday, Burch appeared before the assembled leadership with a proposed letter in response to the Judiciary Committee's demand for action by 5 p.m. The first draft was reported to

have proposed an indefinite delay.

"This is not going to fly," Burch was told. "It's not even going to get off the ground."

At 5:30, Burch returned to the White House, and one hour later, read to Scott on the telephone the letter, which even then, was being delivered at the Judiciary Committee's impeachment headquarters.

The White House had refused to go along with language suggested by both Scott and House Republican Leader John Rhodes of Arizona and the leadership was said to be grumbling that "they still don't go far enough."

The split, by which the Senate leaders come down hard on the side of Congress, marks the first time that the Senate Republicans as a group delivered a pointed and undivided warning to Mr. Nixon, that his conformity is imperative if he is to avoid rapid impeachment by the House.