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Judiciary
May Trim
Charges

Panel Staff
Would Drop
15 Allegations

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The House Judiciary Committee's impeachment staff reported yesterday it can find no substance to 15 relatively peripheral allegations of wrongdoing against President Nixon and is focusing its inquiry on 41 others.

Special Counsel John Doar reported that his staff is concentrating on the President's involvement in the Watergate cover-up, the possibility of fraud in his underpayment of taxes from 1969 to 1972, Mr. Nixon's connection with the White House "plumbers" operation and the "dirty tricks" of the 1972 campaign, and political contributions allegedly made in return for favors from Howard Hughes, Robert L. Vesco, International Telephone and Telegraph Corp. and the dairy industry.

Before hearing this report, the committee voted 34 to 4 to grant the President's request for a five-day extension until next Tuesday at 10 a.m. to respond to the committee's subpoena demanding tapes of about 42 presidential conversations concerning the cover-up of the Watergate break-in.

The allegations Doar proposed dropping included efforts to dismantle the Office of Economic Opportunity and impoundment—the President's refusal to spend funds appropriated by Congress. The staff report said the "administration appears to have complied" with final court orders in these areas.

The 13 other allegations for which the staff found no evidence or not enough to justify a thorough investigation all involved use of government agencies to obtain political contributions through threat of punishment or promise of favor.

These included allegations of contributions from foreign nationals, illegal contributions from labor unions, granting a

Minnesota bank charter and failure of the Commerce Department to enforce safety regulations and of the Environmental Protection Agency to press lawsuits.

But the staff said it is pressing its inquiry into more publicized incidents such as the raising of dairy price supports after the industry pledged large contributions, the \$100,000 Hughes contribution that was returned after three years, the \$200,000 Vesco gift that led to the trial of former Cabinet members John N. Mitchell and Maurice H. Stans and the ITT pledge to help finance the 1972 Republican National Convention while the firm was involved in a large antitrust case.

The committee took no action on Doar's proposed narrowing of the scope of the inquiry. Some Democrats demanded and received assurances from Chairman Peter W. Rodino (D-N.J.) that no allegations will be formally dropped except by a vote of the committee.

But since the committee will have before it only evidence assembled by the staff, it appeared likely that the 15 items on which Doar's staff has closed its investigation will disappear.

Doar said the staff is awaiting a report prepared by the Senate Armed Services Com-

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mittee before deciding whether to recommend that bombing of Cambodia by order of President Nixon from 1969 to 1973 was an impeachable offense. Some of the bombing was done secretly, and several members contend that it was illegal.

Doar stated, as he has before, that the staff is investigating whether criminal fraud had been committed in the President's underpayment of in-

come taxes from disallowed deductions on donation of his pre-presidential papers and tax treatment of his real estate transactions. But Doar added that this is a "complicated matter" and indicated it will take an extra effort if the committee is to stay with its schedule of beginning to consider evidence the week after next.

Doar suggested that the committee might wish to send Mr. Nixon a list of written questions for him to answer on the tax matters. The Joint Committee on Internal Revenue Taxation sent the President a list of questions that he did not answer. However, Mr. Nixon said at his March 6 news conference that he would respond to written questions from the Judiciary Committee under certain conditions.

Doar's staff reportedly is preparing a list of questions asking the President to explain the transactions. Doar also told the committee that the fraud investigation should include taking testimony from lawyers and accountants who helped Mr. Nixon prepare his tax returns.

The 34-to-4 vote granting Mr. Nixon five more days to produce the 42 tapes came only after considerable grumbling by Democrats that the President has had two months to respond to that request and that he was trying to delay forever.

Rodino recommended granting the extension but warned that "we will not be diverted from that course" of determining whether evidence exists to justify impeaching the President and removing him from office.