

Hill Unit

To Admit

St. Clair

Votes Limited Participation In Hearings

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The House Judiciary Committee voted yesterday to grant presidential counsel James D. St. Clair broad but controlled privileges to participate when it begins receiving evidence next week on whether President Nixon should be impeached. He was not given full rights of cross-examination.

After four months during which the 100-member staff assembled evidence and the committee fought with the White House and itself over obtaining data and setting procedures, the 38 members will sit down about the middle of next week to begin hearing the evidence.

Chairman Peter W. Rodino (D-N.J.) said the first stage, when members will for the first time have access to confidential material assembled by the staff, will extend over three or four days and be conducted in closed session.

After that there is expected to be a series of hearings, both open and closed, at which the staff will present detailed testimony and probably call some witnesses to fill gaps in tapes and other assembled evidence.

The committee voted without opposition yesterday to permit live television and radio coverage of all open sessions. The White House said it had no objection. The Columbia Broadcasting System promptly announced it would broadcast sessions when permitted.

Unlike Senate Watergate committee hearings last year and other celebrated televised Senate hearings dating back to the McCarthy hearings of 20 years ago, which were held in the cavernous Senate Caucus Room, the House impeachment hearings will be conducted in the relatively small hearing room of the House Judiciary Committee. The committee refused to move to larger quarters, insisting on conducting the historic proceedings in its own chamber.

The rules adopted by the full committee yesterday permit St. Clair to attend all sessions of the committee, whether open or closed.

See IMPEACH, A21, Col. 4

IMPEACH, From A1

He can call witnesses for the President, but must tell the committee in advance "precisely" what the witness is expected to say.

St. Clair can make objections relating to examination of witnesses or the admissibility of testimony, subject to rulings by the chairman.

The President's lawyer could also "question" any witness, subject to limitations imposed by the chairman as to the length and scope of questioning. But

wards" to extend St. Clair privileges, which he received not as a matter of right but in an effort to be fair to the President.

Rep. Elizabeth Holtzman (D-N.Y.) opposed giving St. Clair the privilege to make objections because it would "let him make objections every minute and turn this into a circus."

Rodino urged extending this privilege to St. Clair, promising, "I will not tolerate any obstruction." Other members observed that if St. Clair abuses any privi-

lege, it can be withdrawn. An attempt to give St. Clair the full right to cross-examine witnesses called by the committee was rejected, 23 to 15. Rep. David Dennis (R-Ind.) insisted that this privilege was essential to dig out the truth. Democrats opposed it on the ground that the privilege to "question" any witness would fully protect the President's rights. They said the impeachment inquiry is not an acourt trial and should not be turned into a full adversary proceeding.

Attempts by some Democrats to limit St. Clair's participation and by some Republicans to enlarge it were defeated by large margins. Democrats said they had already "leaned ver back-

lege, it can be withdrawn.

Senior members led by Rodino and Rep. Edward Hutchinson (R-Mich.) put through, 19 to 17, a rule stating that 10 rather than the usual 20 committee members shall constitute a quorum during hearings. Hutchinson said this was essential so that long hearing sessions need not be forced to adjourn for lack of a quorum.

Rep. Charles Wiggins (R-Calif.) expressed the feelings of many members when he said he found it "repugnant" that the committee should say less than one-third of its members were sufficient to hear testimony on the impeachment of a President.

Committee members also said, but did not write into the rules, that they would expect St. Clair to observe their rule of confidentiality, which forbids them to discuss publicly confidential material in their possession until it is placed in the public record.

The White House, meanwhile, said Mr. Nixon rejects the committee's conclusion, voted 20 to 18 late Wednesday evening, that he had failed to comply with the committee's subpoena when he gave it transcripts rather than original tapes of 42 of his Watergate conversations with top aides.

Gerald L. Warren, deputy White House press secretary, said of the President's submission: "We feel it is complete and we feel it gives the House Judiciary Committee the facts with which to make a fair judgment."



Rep. Robert W. Kastenmeier (D-Wis.) confers with House Judiciary Committee counsel John Doar before the start of yesterday's meeting.

By Bob Burchette—The Washington Post