

NIXON'S ATTORNEY GAINS WIDE ROLE IN RODINO INQUIRY

Impeachment Panel Will Let
St. Clair Query Witnesses
and Raise Objections

MAY 3 1974

HEARINGS OPENED TO TV

Committee Adopts Rules on
Procedures for Sessions

Later This Month

NYTimes

By RICHARD D. LYONS

Special to The New York Times

WASHINGTON, May 2—The House Judiciary Committee voted today to give President Nixon's attorney, James D. St. Clair, broad latitude in defending the President in the panel's hearings on whether Mr. Nixon should be impeached.

Mr. St. Clair would be allowed to question witnesses and make objections to testimony at the hearings, which will start later this month.

Several attempts to restrict Mr. St. Clair's role were defeated, with some Democrats crossing party lines to vote with Republicans on the 38-member committee.

But when several committee members suggested that Mr. St. Clair might engage in ob-

Transcripts

The New York Times continues today, on Pages 17-26, the publication in full and in chronological order of the tape transcripts concerning Watergate that the White House has edited and made public. The remaining transcripts will appear in tomorrow's issue.

structionist tactics, the committee chairman, Representative Peter W. Rodino Jr., Democrat of New Jersey, pointedly said that if such actions started they would not be allowed to continue.

Subject to Approval

Mr. Rodino stressed that the actions of Mr. St. Clair, beyond the rules that were approved today, would be subject to both his approval and that of the full committee.

The committee also voted overwhelmingly to permit the hearings to be televised, as were the sessions of the Senate Watergate Committee last year.

The move was proposed by Representative Robert McClory, Republican of Illinois, as an amendment to so-called "impeachment inquiry procedures," to which the committee devoted its entire activities today, finally passing them by voice vote.

In a series of long arguments dealing with the semantics of what Mr. St. Clair would and would not be allowed to do, the committee voted to allow him to "question" witnesses but not to "examine and cross-examine" them.

About 20 amendments were

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offered to the "impeachment inquiry procedure," contained in a report to the full committee from a subcommittee headed by Representative Robert W. Kastenmeier, Democrat of Wisconsin.

As reported out by the subcommittee, the procedures, actually the ground rules under which the impeachment hearings will be conducted, made no mention of television coverage. This would not have precluded such coverage, but it would have had to be approved daily by the committee.

But a new paragraph added to the four-page procedures today said:

"Any portion of the hearings open to the public may be covered by television broadcast, radio broadcast, still photography, or by any of such methods of coverage in accord with the rules of the House and

the rules of procedures of the committee as amended on Nov. 12, 1973."

The only opposition was a lone, barely audible "no" vote from the Democratic side of the committee.

Television coverage was permitted for hearings by the Senate Watergate committee last year.

Shortly before the Judiciary Committee approved the television amendment, Dean Burch, a Presidential counselor, met with newsmen in the Executive Office Building and was asked if the White House would object to the television hearings.

"No, not at all," Mr. Burch replied.

Taking note of the Congressional elections in November, Mr. Burch said, "I must say that I cannot think of anything that would be more unfortunate than for the American electoral process to keep an impeachment proceeding going right through the election," he added: "It is just not the right thing to do, in my opinion, and I

wish that the committee would go ahead and take the action they are going to take as expeditiously as they can. I am not sitting here saying they are stalling or doing anything else. I just wish they would get going and make a decision."

Hopes for Early End

Asked when he thought the action in the House would be completed, Mr. Burch said, "I would like to think that the House could complete its work certainly by the early part, or mid-part, of June."

However, after the committee meeting today, Mr. Rodino indicated that hearing themselves might not get started for at least a week or so.

Mr. Rodino said that the "initial phase" of the hearings would start next week, although he has not yet set the date for the opening. During this phase, he said, the case for impeachment would be formally presented to the committee, probably requiring three or four days. For this phase, he said,



The New York Times/George Tames

Peter W. Rodino Jr., left, chairman of the House Judiciary Committee, conferring yesterday with Edward Hutchinson, right, ranking Republican member of the committee, and Robert W. Kastenmeier, Democrat of Wisconsin.

the committee will sit in closed session.

Mr. St. Clair would presumably not be allowed to sit in on these sessions.

One attempt today to sharply restrict Mr. St. Clair's activities at the hearings was overwhelmingly defeated by voice vote.

This amendment was introduced by Representative George E. Danielson, Democrat of California, who argued that Mr. St. Clair had "no business in appearing as an adversary counsel in this hearing."

Representative Charles B. Rangel, Democrat of Manhattan, supported the amendment, stating that "Mr. St. Clair's activities could prevent us from getting the answers to questions."