

## Impeachment Panel Votes to Make Public Most of the Evidence It Has Been Studying

By JOHN PIERSON

Staff Reporter of THE WALL STREET JOURNAL  
WASHINGTON — The House Judiciary Committee voted to print and make public some 7,000 pages of evidence bearing on whether President Nixon should be impeached.

Release of the evidence, which the committee has been hearing in secret for the past month and a half, may dramatically alter the nature of the impeachment proceeding and could affect the outcome.

What to date has been a private, grand-jury-like inquiry will become more like a full-fledged public trial, tending to polarize the panel between Democratic accusers and Republican defenders.

It may give President Nixon's lawyer, James St. Clair, a chance to try out his fabled courtroom technique well in advance of any Senate trial.

And it may further delay the impeachment proceeding.

Exactly when the public will see the 7,000 pages isn't certain. Printing will take time.

Some members expressed hope that the first volumes could be released as early as next week. But Chairman Peter Rodino (D., N.J.) would say only that he hoped to make the material public before the committee begins debating possible articles of impeachment July 15.

The vote to release the evidence, 22 to 16, didn't follow party lines. Six Republicans joined 16 Democrats for publication; five Democrats joined 11 Republicans against.

"The public has a right to know," explained Rep. Wayne Owens (D., Utah), who sponsored the motion.

Beyond that, the committee has been embarrassed by leaks of information presented behind closed doors, most of it harmful to Mr. Nixon's cause. Publishing the evidence should put a stop to most leaks.

### Some Material to Be Deleted

The committee, however, gave Chairman Rodino and Rep. Edward Hutchinson of Michigan, the panel's senior Republican, authority to delete classified material on the secret bombing of Cambodia as well as anything else they think shouldn't be made public. Rep. Rodino was vague about what this might be, although he and Rep. Hutchinson already have deleted some obscenity from transcripts the committee staff has prepared from tapes of Mr. Nixon's conversations.

Some of the panel's outspoken advocates of impeachment, liberal Democrats, also believe that letting the public see what the committee has seen will build public pressure for impeachment. "If people knew what we know, the temperature would be up several degrees," Rep. John Conyers (D., Mich.) has declared.

Rep. Charles Wiggins (R., Calif.), one of the President's strongest defenders on the

committee, seemed to acknowledge this yesterday when he said the panel should be allowed to decide about impeachment "on the evidence and the law and not the kind of pressure the committee's bound to be under the moment that evidence is released."

It isn't certain, however, that publication of the evidence hurts Mr. Nixon's cause more than it helps it. Rep. Owens said the material "won't be near as sensational to the President as his own transcripts." Mr. Nixon caused an uproar last month when he released edited transcripts of some of his taped conversations relating to Watergate.

Moreover, the decision to go public with the evidence puts added pressure on the committee to hear witnesses in public, too. The panel is due to decide today what witnesses to call, beginning probably next week. One likely witness is former White House counsel John Dean, the President's chief accuser.

Mr. St. Clair, the President's lawyer, will have the right to question the witnesses. And if the testimony is public, it is anticipated he will try to discredit Mr. Dean.

### Public Debates and Votes

Publishing the evidence makes it probable the committee's debate and vote on possible impeachment articles will be public, too. Some members would prefer to do this privately, releasing only evidence that is needed to support any articles of impeachment the committee adopts and leaving debate on the articles for the floor of the House.

A private debate in committee might have tended to reduce partisanship. A public debate will almost certainly see many Democrats attacking the President and many Republicans defending him. Whether Chairman Rodino's dream of a bipartisan impeachment report can survive such a debate remains to be seen.

It is also possible that a stagey cross-examination by Mr. St. Clair and a partisan public debate will further delay the committee, which has failed to meet every deadline

set for it so far. House Democratic leaders hope to be able to vote on impeachment by the end of August.

Finally, some pro-impeachment Democrats are concerned that releasing the evidence, which they say includes many unsubstantiated charges, could create a wave of sympathy for Mr. Nixon. Rep. Don Edwards (D., Calif.) said if he were Mr. St. Clair, he would argue for acquittal in the Senate on the ground that his client had been denied due process in the House.

But the evidence that is released won't be entirely one-sided. It is to include the response to the committee's staff presentation that Mr. St. Clair is due to make late this week.

There is also some danger that turning the evidence loose could upset the Watergate-related trials of former Nixon aides, whose testimony could be useful in the impeachment proceeding. But Rep. Owens said the evidence won't be released until after the jury is sequestered in the trial of former Nixon aide John Ehrlichman, who is accused of ordering a burglary at the office of Daniel Ellsberg's psychiatrist. That trial begins today.

Mr. Owens also quoted Special Prosecutor Leon Jaworski as saying that early publication of the evidence would be less likely than later publication to harm this fall's trial of seven former Nixon aides accused of covering up White House involvement in the Watergate break-in.

Earlier yesterday, the committee's 21 Democrats defeated a move by the panel's 17 Republicans to subpoena information from the House clerk concerning campaign contributions by dairymen to members of Congress. The committee has been considering a charge that Mr. Nixon increased dairy price supports and import barriers in return for a campaign contribution from the milk industry.

But Rep. Wiley Mayne (R., Iowa) said the President acted only after "intense pressure" from Congress.

Rep. William Hungate (D., Mo.) declared there is "a difference between a legitimate campaign contribution and a bribe." And Rep. Ray Thornton (D., Ark.) said if the dairymen's contribution was "a factor" in the President's decision, "it doesn't matter what the other factors were."