

President Optimistic

By Carroll Kilpatrick
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President Nixon believes that while the House Judiciary Committee may vote a bill of impeachment the full House will not to do so and thus will not "pass the buck" to the Senate, press secretary Ronald L. Ziegler said yesterday.

Ziegler made the comment shortly before Mr. Nixon flew late in the day to his California home for a two-week stay and to prepare what is described as a major address on the economy.

Instead of being depressed by publication of the mass of new material relating to the impeachment proceeding, the President remains confident that he will be a victor when the House votes, Ziegler said.

"The President recognizes that this is a political process and he would not be surprised by a committee vote against him," Ziegler said. "He does feel strongly that the House will not vote impeachment."

Earlier, presidential lawyer James D. St. Clair was quoted as predicting that the House committee, composed of 21 Democrats and 17 Republicans, would vote for impeachment but that the full House would not.

Deputy press secretary Gerald L. Warren, when asked about the St. Clair com-

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ment, said that the President agreed with it.

Questioned about St. Clair's reported comment, Warren said that the President has "great confidence" in his attorney and shared his assessment of what the committee and the House would do.

St. Clair is in an excellent position to make such an assessment, Warren said.

But later, St. Clair denied having made the prediction about the House committee, declaring that it would be "quite presumptuous of me to make up the committee's mind for it."

Warren then followed up by saying "I made a mistake" and was "operating under a misunderstanding" of what St. Clair had said.

"In short," Warren said, "the President does not feel it appropriate to predict the outcome of the proceedings before the House Judiciary Committee . . . I can state on behalf of the White House that we are confident that if the matter reaches the floor of the House of Representatives, impeachment will not be voted."

Ziegler, who has issued daily blasts this week against the Judiciary Committee, said that the evidence it has published "certainly helps the

President" in the fight against impeachment.

"There's no bombshell in there, there's nothing new there," the press secretary said of the nearly 4,000 pages of Judiciary Committee material, which many observers have regarded as damaging to the President.

"What it does show is how partisan the leaks were from the Drinans, the Conyers, the Brookses, the Waldies," Ziegler said. He was referring to Democratic Reps. Robert Drinnan (Mass.), John Conyers (Mich.), Jack Brooks (Tex.) and Jerome Waldie (Calif.)

Neither Ziegler nor Warren has ever been willing to say how much time Mr. Nixon spends on impeachment matters, but this week particularly they have emphasized his concentration on other issues, particularly the economy.

Yesterday the President conferred with Secretary of Agriculture Earl L. Butz—the fourth Cabinet member to confer privately with the President this week—met with staff members and, in an office ceremony, signed the congressional budget and impoundment control bill, a basic reform of congressional budgetary procedures.

He also attended memorial services for the late Chief Justice Earl Warren at Washington Cathedral and met in the Rose Garden with the visiting Chinese acrobatic team, the Wu Shu's.

Critics have speculated on why Mr. Nixon, after spending

a full week in Washington for the first time in almost six weeks, would pick this time to go to his home in San Clemente, in effect turning his back on Congress and the impeachment process.

But it seemed to be part of his general strategy of publicly concentrating on other issues. He will confer with Vice President Ford this morning "on the economy," the White House announced.

The President has seen Ford on several occasions this week in Washington, but Ford is to be in California anyway this weekend and the President asked him to meet him in San Clemente for what appears to some to be a demonstration of activity on non-impeachment matters.

Roy L. Ash, director of the Office of Management and Budget, accompanied the President and Mrs. Nixon to California. Other economic aides are expected to confer there with the President before he delivers his economic message, expected in about a week.

In signing the new budget act, the President said that "a major cause for inflation is overspending by government." He promised to work to keep down the cost of government to "help every American family balance their family budgets."

Warren said that Mr. Nixon has been considering "the basic course" the nation

should take in the fight against inflation.

But when asked if basic policy changes were in the offing, he warned against expecting changes in the tax structure or any return to wage and price controls.

The budget reform bill, which Mr. Nixon praised, will change the start of the government's fiscal year beginning in 1976 from July 1 to Oct. 1, require Congress to focus on overall budget totals in preparing appropriations bills, establish House and Senate budget committees and a congressional budget office, restrict the President's impoundment discretion and generally give Congress more power over the purse.

The impoundment control provisions "may well limit the ability of the federal government to respond promptly and effectively to rapid changes in economic conditions," Mr. Nixon said. He expressed hope Congress would simplify the provisions at a later date.

The President said he would "propose a broad range of legislation which will be needed to cut back individual programs" and achieve a budget balance in fiscal 1976.

OMB chief Ash, asked what programs would be cut back, said the President was not necessarily talking about reduction of any programs. The object will be to restrain the growth of programs and to cut back in the built-in rates of growth, Ash said.