

Rep. Holt May Bolt Nixon Camp

By Stephen Green

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President Nixon yesterday appeared to be on the verge of losing his strongest Maryland supporter in the House of Representatives in his effort to avoid impeachment.

Republican Rep. Marjorie Holt said in an interview, that if she "looked at" impeachment "as a moral issue" she would vote for impeachment.

Mrs. Holt kept open the possibility that she might end up voting against impeachment. She said she would wait until seeing a formal impeachment resolution before making a final decision.

At the same time, she issued a strongly-worded press release, stating she has been "absolutely disgusted with the moral tone of the Nixon administration for some time. The plots and schemes and even criminal acts of men intimately associated with the White House have outraged the moral sense of the nation."

Mrs. Holt last year voted for the President's position 69 per cent of the time in the House. This was the highest percentage of support for Mr. Nixon among members of the Maryland House delegation.

Second, with 67 per cent, was Rep. Lawrence J. Hogan (R-Md.) who Tuesday became the first member of the House Judiciary Committee to declare he will vote for impeachment.



MARJORIE S. HOLT
... appears on verge

Mrs. Holt represents the Fourth Congressional District, which includes Anne Arundel County and southern Prince George's County. Hogan represents the fifth Congressional District, which includes the northern part of Prince George's.

Another Maryland Republican, Rep. Gilbert Gude, already has said he expects to vote for impeachment. Gude represents the Eighth Congressional District, which includes most of Montgomery County.

Mrs. Holt, regarded as one of the most conservative House members, recently polled her constituents on the impeachment question. About 46 per cent of the respondents said Mr. Nixon should resign

or be impeached and 45 per cent said he should complete his term. About 9 per cent were undecided.

In response to another poll question, 49.6 per cent said Mr. Nixon is not doing a good job as President and 42 per cent said he is doing a good job. Another 5.6 per cent were undecided.

Mrs. Holt said that is she "looked at it (impeachment)" as a moral issue—as how my children and grandchildren might see it. I would have to say he (the President) should be impeached."

But, she said the question of morality "is not an impeachable offense."

Mrs. Holt also said she would use a less strict standard than the "guilt-beyond-a-reasonable-doubt" test, which Hogan said he used in arriving at his impeachment decision.

Mrs. Holt said "the question to come before the House "is not guilt or innocence, but whether there is sufficient evidence that the President committed an impeachable offense to send the case to trial by the Senate. From my reading of the evidence, the issue is not easily resolved. I shall try to vote as though I were a member of a grand jury separated from the sound and fury of politics."

Mrs. Holt also said that Hogan's decision to vote for impeachment had nothing to do with her position. One of her aides said she decided Monday to issue her press release.

Another Washington-area

legislator, Stanford E. Parris (R-Va.), said he has not yet decided how he would vote on impeachment in the House. He said that if Mr. Nixon fails to comply with yesterday's Supreme Court order for release of presidential tapes to Special Watergate Prosecutor Leon Jaworski, it "probably" would be an impeachable offense.

Rep. Joel T. Broyhill (R-Va.) previously has said Mr. Nixon should consider resigning.

Meanwhile, an influential House Republican said yesterday that Hogan's pro-impeachment announcement was having a sizable effect on other GOP House members.

Rep. Thomas F. Railsback (R-Ill.), a member of the House Judiciary Committee, said that Hogan's announcement "had a lot of impact. A lot of moderate and conservative Republicans are reassessing. You could hear it on the floor yesterday (Tuesday) afternoon.

"They're more open-minded now, rather than lined up against impeachment, and they'll listen more to the evidence," he continued. "Hogan was such a strong Nixon supporter, such a law and order man . . . It allayed the fears of some who were scared about voting for impeachment, and it scared some of those who were prepared to vote against impeachment. It really shook them up."