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Voices of New South Emerge at Hearing

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WASHINGTON, July 25—Representative James R. Mann, an imperturbable Democrat from Greenville, S. C., surveyed his colleagues on the House Judiciary Committee.

"We have different backgrounds," he said. "We have different biases, different philosophies. This is a big country, and we represent a cross section of that country."

You could hear those differences all day and into this evening as member after member of the committee stated his view of the impeachment proceedings against President Nixon, speaking in the accents of their regions.

There was Fish of Dutchess County, New York, with the aristocratic intona-

tions of a Franklin Roosevelt or an Averell Harriman; Dennis of Indiana, with the flat twang of the flatlands, talking of the Supreme Court.

Wiggins, Waldie and Danielson of California, speaking in that neutral accent characteristic of their state, the one radio announcers are taught to emulate; Rodino of New Jersey, his speech tinged with the harshness of Newark and Bayonne and Jersey City; Flowers of Alabama, comfy, down-home.

But there was something

of moment lurking beneath the accents, something a bit startling. The Southerners who spoke today were not the Congressional Southerners of yore—not the Claghorns the nation came to know through cartoons and anecdotes and Fred Allen's radio show. Not those florid orators in string ties and ice-cream suits. Not Bilbo or Rivers or McKellar.

Instead, on display today was the new South. In Mr. Mann and Representatives Walter Flowers, Democrat of Alabama, and M. Caldwell Butler, Republican of Virginia, the television audience had a chance to see men relatively moderate in view, unremarkable in dress, low-keyed in manner.

Like the region they represent, they were obviously

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struggling to reconcile new and old values. For all their modernism, their lack of obvious regional foibles, they retained the South's love for language and institutions.

To many in the hearing room, including a number of committee members, Mr. Mann's 15-minute presentation seemed particularly eloquent. Never raising his voice, seldom glancing at his sparse notes, pausing for emphasis at just the right moments, he reminded some of a gifted rural parson.

The American system of government, he said, had been "defended on the battlefields" and in the halls of Congress by men who either "passed into oblivion or into immortality."

"How much," he said, in his quiet, almost courtly evocation of the patriotism the South has cherished, "how much I would have liked to have heard on the transcripts, 'Let's do it because it's good for the country.'"

Similarly Mr. Flowers, speaking about the "terrible

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alternatives" of convulsive impeachment or wrongdoing condoned. And Mr. Butler, whose almost headlong manner of presentation seemed to conflict with his long face, receding chin and rather sleepy eyes.

There was a touch of Jefferson in his comment that "the abuse of power is the very essence of tyranny," and that was fitting, for Mr. Butler's home in Roanoke is only 100 miles from Mr. Jefferson's in Charlottesville.

'Watergate Is On Shame'

"For years, we Republicans have campaigned against corruption," the Virginian said. "But Watergate is our shame. We cannot indulge ourselves in the luxury of patronizing or excusing corrupt conduct."

It was not easy for any of the three, Mr. Butler, suggesting that he would vote for impeachment, remarked that "there will be no joy in it for me." And a colleague reported that Mr. Flowers, outwardly so calm, had a new ulcer.

If the Southerners set the rhetorical tone for much of the day, two Californians—

Representatives Charles E. Wiggins, a Republican, and Jerome R. Waldie, a Democrat—seemed in many ways the most dramatic of adversaries.

Mr. Wiggins is the unofficial floor manager of the President's defenders, Mr. Waldie, one of the earliest and most outspoken of Mr. Nixon's adversaries. Mr. Wiggins comes from Southern California (he represents part of the President's old Congressional district), Mr. Waldie from the North, Mr. Wiggins dresses flashily, Mr. Waldie somberly. Mr. Wiggins has wavy white hair, Mr. Waldie dark hair with gray sideburns. And Mr. Wiggins relentlessly argued on narrow evidentiary grounds, while Mr. Waldie insisted on the larger picture.

Mr. Wiggins began by attacking as inconsequential the evidence of Presidential misuse of the Central Intelligence Agency, and then when a colleague yielded additional time to him, derided evidence that Mr. Nixon had misused the Internal Revenue Service.

Noting that the committee

staff had produced 38 books of evidence, Mr. Wiggins looked at John Doar, the committee's special counsel, and commented, "My guess, Mr. Doar, is that you could put all the admissible evidence in one-half of one single book."

Mr. Waldie replied calmly but forcefully, gesturing with a partially clenched right hand. "It is just not true" that evidence is lacking, he said, accusing Mr. Nixon of operating by "the saddest standard of conduct."

'Had It Erased'

"There is a duty to respond," Mr. Waldie contended. "Yet there is not one single instance of the President going to the authorities with evidence of wrongdoing."

Discussing the 18½-minute gap in a key Presidential tape recording, he said that "the inference is inescapable: the President had it erased."

Mr. Wiggins, craning his neck at the opposite end of the room, shook his head at that. Moments later, he got his chance for rebuttal before the television cameras. He

pronounced himself frustrated and said it irritated him that "you just have to sit and take these sweeping allegations, absolutely unsupported by the evidence."

But he had evidently made some points.

A third Californian, Representative Don Edwards, a Democrat, slipped a note to Representative Peter W. Rodino Jr., Democrat of New Jersey, the committee chairman, urging that someone be designated to reply to Mr. Wiggins.

"He's making a first-class attack," said Mr. Edwards. "He's trying to cut the guts out of our case."

The replies were quick in coming, and not from Democrats alone. One of the most spirited came from Representative William S. Cohen, a 33-year-old Republican from Maine, who accused Mr. Wiggins of quoting out of context and asked how his brethren could tolerate "silent and subtle subversion" of laws and the Constitution.

"How in the world," asked Mr. Cohen, "did we ever get from the Federalist papers to the edited transcript?"