

7-28-74

SF
EXAM

Dixiecrat went through motions for Nixon

Knight News Service

WASHINGTON — The role of "Mr. Specific" passed yesterday from Rep. Charles Sandman, a New Jersey Republican, to Rep. Walker Flowers, an Alabama Democrat.

All day Friday and on into the night, it was Sandman who was demanding that President Nixon's accusers be more specific and state precisely what they were accusing the President of.

Since Sandman is a hard-core Nixon supporter, his questions were regarded as basically a delaying move.

Yesterday, he gave up the tactic, saying he didn't have the votes to stop impeachment.

Up stepped Flowers, whose district voted 80 per cent for Nixon in 1972, and took over Sandman's series of motions to "strike" (eliminate) most of the operative para-

graphs in the first article of Impeachment.

Flowers' purpose was quite different from Sandman's. The courtly Alabamian thinks the President should be impeached.

His purpose, he said, was not to delay the proceedings but to lay on the public record — before a nationwide TV audience and his conservative constituents back home — at least a brief summary of the evidence he believes supports the charges against Nixon.

Thus Flowers frankly acknowledged that his repeated motions to "strike" did not mean what they said — but rather were a "device" to elicit information.

Pro-impeachment members, both Republican and Democrat, had requested briefing papers from the committee staff. As each paragraph of the first article came up for debate, they were prepared with names and dates and incidents to buttress the charge.

Sandman protested the proceedings in vain, complaining that the impeachment forces were "boring" the American people.

Flowers, who really didn't want to kill the charges but couldn't vote against his own motion, sometimes smilingly voted "present."

In the end, after a few quiet words of explanation, he cast his vote for impeachment.

"I have been guided by the facts and by my conscience," he said. "I have nothing to gain politically by what I do here . . ."

"Many people in my district will disagree with me. Many of my closest friends are firm supporters of President Nixon.

"I can only trust that they would do the same thing if they were in my place on this unhappy day."