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# Impeachment Procedures

It took House Judiciary Committee members only 10 hours to state whether they were for or against impeachment, but they are taking twice that long to decide how the indictment of President Nixon should be phrased.

After an evening and full day of general debate, the committee for the past two days has been amending Article I, which charges President Nixon with involvement in the Watergate cover-up. The amendments ranged from minor language changes to efforts to delete major provisions.

Any member may offer an amendment, and then he and any other may speak five minutes for or against it. If one member has more to say, he may persuade another to yield time. Members are generally recognized by seniority and alternately by party, and may yield to others for questions or argument. The committee had agreed, in advance to limit the amending process to 20 hours, but that could be extended.

A member may offer an amendment simply as a parliamentary maneuver to get time to speak. At this stage, this is the only way a member can get the floor, except to make an inquiry of the chair about procedure. Rep. Walter Flowers (D-Ala.) offered a series of amendments

yesterday not because he wanted to strike the sections, as his amendments would have done, but to permit debate that would specify offenses charged against the President. Voting is by voice unless one member asks for a roll call.

Each of the two or three articles of impeachment will be voted on separately. No final vote is expected on the package because each article stands on its own. Adoption of a single article by the committee and then by the House would be sufficient to send the issue to the Senate for trial. A majority vote of the House is required for impeachment, and a two-thirds vote by the Senate to remove the President from office.

After the committee completes its work, it must write a report explaining to the House in detail why it has recommended impeachment. The committee will then go to the House Rules Committee in about a week to get a resolution fixing ground rules for House consideration. The House is expected to debate the articles about two weeks under a rule permitting amendments like the committee procedure and vote about Aug. 24. If the case goes to the Senate, the trial is expected to last about two months, with some delay in between to permit the President's lawyers to prepare his defense.