

# Plea on Nixon Strategy

Washington

Two of President Nixon's staunchest Congressional supporters appealed to the White House yesterday to avert a landslide defeat in the House by directly asking for impeachment in the interest of getting a prompt trial in the Senate.

The two Republican congressmen, Representatives Sam Steiger of Arizona and Charles S. Gubser of California, told White House counselor Dean Burch that Mr. Nixon would be fortunate to receive even 100 votes after two weeks of televised impeachment hearings.

Burch was not available for comment.

But another White House official said, without elaboration, that the proposal is "under serious scrutiny."

The proposal made yesterday by Gubser and Steiger has been a familiar topic of GOP cloakroom conversation in the House ever since it was first put forth five months ago by Representative Lou Frey Jr. (Rep-Fla.), who no longer advocates it. But it was primarily popular with GOP congressmen who were not principally regarded as either senior Republicans or defenders of the President.

Gubser, a 21-year veteran of the House, and Steiger, a congressman since 1966, are not in this category.

Both have strongly backed Mr. Nixon within the House, both oppose his impeachment.

Some other congressmen were skeptical that the President himself would accept the idea of asking for impeachment in the interest of weakening the effect of such an action by the House.

"This idea has been floated to the White House before and it usually sinks when it gets to the President's office" said Representative Barbie Conable (Rep-N.Y.). "Now it's being revived again in the hope that it will dilute the cup of hemlock we will have to drink."

In discussing the proposal with Burch, both Gubser and Steiger stressed the impact of the television hearings of the House Judiciary Committee. Steiger said that "a stampede" was developing in the House that could impair Mr. Nixon's chances to survive a trial in the Senate.

There were other signs yesterday that Mr. Nixon's position has seriously eroded in the House.

Minority leader John Rhodes (Rep-Ariz.) emphasized that he had not

reached any decision on his own impeachment stand and said the issue should not be polarized along party lines.

Representative John Anderson of Illinois, leader of the House GOP conference, said that "people are milling around, floundering, trying to decide upon a course of action."

And in the Senate, two senators said that they had been sounded out by Bryce Harlow, the President's former counselor, about Mr. Nixon's prospects in a trial.

The official White House view — usually enunciated by press secretary Ronald L. Ziegler — is that Mr. Nixon has nothing to worry about in the Senate because impeachment will be defeated in the House.

This view has scant, if any, support in the House.

Democrats also expressed awareness of the discomfiture of their Republican colleagues having a recorded vote on the impeachment issue.

"I'm sure there's a lot of people who would like to take the impeachment vote by voice vote," said the House majority leader Thomas O'Neill, "but it isn't going to happen."

Not all Republicans were looking for a way out, how-

ever. Several said that the impeachment process had to run its course regardless of consequences and actively opposed proposals to forestall a vote on the merits.

In the maneuvering surrounding the impeachment issue Burch emerged as the leading White House negotiator with the House.

Representative Charles Wiggins (Rep-Calif.), the President's most effective defender on the House Judiciary Committee, said he was called by Burch on Monday, the day the second impeachment article cleared the committee by a 28 to 10 vote.

Wiggins told the Associated Press that Burch asked his opinion about whether it would "be in the President's best interest" to get the Judiciary Committee's action over with quickly.

Wiggins said he thought it would be.

Washington Post

## Woodcutters' Pact Vancouver, B.C.

Members of the International Woodworkers of America in the British Columbia interior Monday accepted a new one-year contract.

United Press