

Nixon's Losses in Senate Told

Washington

Senate support for President Nixon has been ebbing steadily in recent weeks, and the Senate already may be only seven to nine votes short of the 67 votes needed to oust him from office in an impeachment trial.

That is the view of about a dozen of the Senate's best vote-counters, surveyed this week by the Washington Post.

While stressing that senators aren't locked into any final positions and may well shift their views during the course of the anticipated trial, they estimate that 58 to 60 senators probably are already "leaning toward" a vote to oust Mr. Nixon from office.

And they say that with the tide appearing to be running steadily against the President, there is a very strong chance that the two-thirds vote (67 of the 100 senators) needed to oust him from office will eventually be obtained.

"I'd say its about 60 to



SENATOR RUSSELL LONG
'Anybody's guess'



SENATOR JOHN TOWER
No leaning

40," said one of the two most accurate GOP vote counters in the Senate. "I see no pluses whatever for the President. I think his chances of getting convicted are a heluva lot stronger than a few weeks ago. If Barry Goldwater leaves the reservation, it's all over."

"His support is eroding every day," said Senator

position has eroded; there is every indication it's going to get worse. I'd say more than half would vote for conviction now. I don't know how I'm going to vote."

One prominent GOP senator has placed the anti-Nixon vote at 58 to 42 at present, another at 60 to 20 with another 20 possibly going either way.

Senator John Tower (Rep.-Tex.) cautioned that it is "precipitous to say" how the final vote will come out, warning that neither he, nor virtually any other senator he knows, is "locked into anything" (Tower is generally viewed as pro-Nixon).

"Even people who have already tentatively made up their minds can change them," Tower said, adding that he has no leaning one way or the other.

Nevertheless, there appears to be strong and widespread feeling among senators that President Nixon has been losing ground for

months.

Possibly the most significant factor is the shrinkage of what has been called the "hardcore" pro-Nixon vote.

A few months ago, White House backers were walking around scoffing at the possibility of impeachment and asserting, "We've got 40 to 50 votes against conviction by the Senate, all day, every day."

That confident tone is gone, and conservatives who were believed to be Nixon bitter-enders are talking privately about wanting out.

One Southern Republican, thought to be fanatically loyal to the President, has shifted in recent months and has been telling associates that unless the White House comes up with some amazing new evidence on Mr. Nixon's behalf, he finds it hard to imagine himself voting "no" when the impeachment vote is cast following the Senate trial.

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