

ALLIES IN HOUSE SHIFTING ON NIXON

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Rhodes and All 10 G.O.P.
Backers on Judiciary Unit
Now For Impeachment
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WASHINGTON, Aug. 6—One by one, with mixed feelings of sorrow and relief, President Nixon's political friends in the House of Representatives joined today in a march toward impeachment.

Representative John J. Rhodes of Arizona, the House minority leader, announced at

Text of statement by Rhodes will be found on Page 17.

an afternoon news conference that he had decided to vote for impeachment because "cover-up of criminal activity and misuse of Federal agencies can neither be condoned nor tolerated."

Earlier in the day, mimeograph machines throughout the three House office buildings cranked out scores of impeachment statements by Republicans and Southern Democrats who, until yesterday, had supported the President.

"I feel that I have been deceived," said Representative Edward Hutchinson of Michigan, the ranking Republican on the House Judiciary Committee.

All 10 of the Judiciary Committee members who voted against impeachment last week and the week before said that they would now vote for at least one article.

The impeachment tide has reached such heights by this afternoon that members of the

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Democratic and Republican leadership decided that only one week, rather than two, would be needed for the impeachment debate on the House floor.

By the day's end, only two members of the House — Representative Earl F. Landgrebe, Republican of Indiana, and Representative Otto E. Passman, Democrat of Louisiana — had said publicly that they continued to oppose impeachment.

2 Still Back Nixon

"I'm sticking by my President even if he and I have to be taken out of this building and shot," Mr. Landgrebe declared.

Mr. Passman said only that "to err is human, to forgive divine."

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Mr. Rhodes said that not a single Republican had come to him to say that he still supported the President.

Many Republicans expressed deep sorrow at having to vote to impeach a President that they had admired so much. Representative William B. Widnall of New Jersey, who has served in the House for 24 years, said that he was "heart-sick." Representative Edwin B. Forsythe, another New Jersey Republican, said that he had come to his decision "with deep regret."

But, despite these solemnities, there was an air of relief, almost giddiness, throughout the House.

This morning, as the Rules Committee met to approve the televising of the impeachment debate, Representative John Young, a Texas Democrat, remarked that the President might resign and that the television resolution might not be needed.

If the President does not resign, Representative Spark M. Matsunaga, a Hawaii Democrat, remarked, "maybe we could do impeachment on the suspension calendar." That is the calendar used by the House for the most routine legislation.

"Unanimous consent would be better," added James J. Delaney, a Queens Democrat.

'A Terrific Burden'

Representative Trent Lott, of Mississippi, a Republican on the Judiciary Committee, told reporters that "a terrific burden has been lifted from our shoulders."

And Representative John N. Erlenborn of Illinois, a deeply conservative Republican who for six years has been the Nixon Administration's spokesman on labor legislation in the House, reflected the feelings of most of his colleagues.

"I had a very difficult decision to make," Mr. Erlenborn said. "Now the President, in effect, has removed all doubts of his guilt. Sure, there's a sense of relief."

As the House convened at noon, dozens of Representatives crowded around the news tickers in the Speaker's lobby, just off the house floor, watching for news that the President's Cabinet meeting had ended and wondering if there might be an announcement of his resignation.

When that did not happen, some Representatives expressed disappointment, but there was

a widespread feeling that resignation eventually was inevitable.

"There's plenty of time for him to do it," said Representative Delbert L. Latta of Ohio, one of the Republicans who had supported Mr. Nixon during the Judiciary Committee proceedings.

There was repeated talk in the cloakrooms and corridors about whether Congress should pass legislation granting the President immunity from prosecution should he resign.

Opinion by O'Neill

Representative Thomas P. O'Neill, Jr. of Massachusetts, the House majority leader, said he thought the overwhelming number of Americans would feel that Mr. Nixon had "suffered enough" if he left office.

But the consensus of members seemed to be that Congress did not have the authority under the Constitution to pass an immunity bill and that, furthermore, a majority of members

might not support it.

Representative Jack Brooks, Democrat of Texas, said that the Constitution had placed the power on pardon in the President and that it also forbade ex post facto laws.

The Democratic and Republican leaders agreed that so few Congressmen wanted to speak against impeachment that the House debate could be concluded in one week, instead of two, as had been scheduled.

Tentatively, the leaders agreed that the debate would begin Aug. 19. Twenty-five hours of general debate would be allowed on Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday of that week. Then, unless the leaders' plan, the House would vote on Thursday and Friday, Aug. 22 and 23.

Some members thought even that was more time than was needed. Representative Robert McClory, an Illinois Republican, said he thought that the debate could be wrapped up in "four or five hours."

But Representative Peter W. Rodino Jr. of New Jersey, the Judiciary Committee chairman, who attended the leadership meeting, was said to believe that a thorough debate was needed for the sake of precedents.

Mr. Rhodes had been scheduled to announce his position yesterday, but he postponed it Sunday afternoon after receiving a call from Gen. Alexander M. Haig Jr., the President's chief of staff, who told him that new evidence would be released.

The Republican leader said that he had opposed impeachment on the charge of obstruction of justice until yesterday, after he had read the newly released transcript showing that Mr. Nixon had been an early participant in efforts to limit the Watergate investigation.

The disclosure of that transcript, Mr. Rhodes declared, was a "cataclysmic affair."

It forced him, he said, to vote for impeachment as "matter of conscience." He said that he would not impose his "in-

terpretation of the evidence" on other Republicans.

Among the most upset of the Representatives were the Judiciary Committee Republicans who had stood by the President throughout the committee's proceedings.

"We stuck our neck out," said Representative David W. Dennis of Indiana.

Other Republicans on the committee who had backed Mr. Nixon were Henry P. Smith Jr. of upstate New York, Charles W. Sandman Jr. of New Jersey, Charles E. Wiggins of California, Hamilton Fish Jr. of upstate New York, Wiley Mayne of Iowa, Carlos J. Moorhead of California and Joseph J. Maraziti Jr. of New Jersey.

One member reportedly called Mr. Rodino to ask if the committee's debate could be reconvened with another vote taken.

"He was told politely," a committee official said, "that the train had left the station."



Associated Press

Republicans who defended President Nixon in Judiciary Committee debate but have changed their minds, from left, top row: Edward Hutchinson, Joseph J. Maraziti,

Charles E. Wiggins, David W. Dennis and Trent Lott; bottom row: Henry P. Smith 3d, Carlos J. Moorhead, Charles W. Sandman Jr., Wiley Mayne, Delbert L. Latta.