

Staff chief in JFK inquiry quits



COUNSEL RICHARD SPRAGUE
 'Nothing left to do'

WASHINGTON (AP) — Richard Sprague, embattled chief counsel to the House Assassination Committee, resigned last night. He was convinced that the House would halt the investigation if he remained on the job.

The House votes today on whether to continue the investigation of the murders of John F. Kennedy and Martin Luther King Jr. If the vote fails, the investigation ends at midnight tomorrow.

Sprague submitted a two-sentence resignation, effective immediately, after a 3½-hour meeting last night with committee Chairman Lois Stokes, D-Ohio, and several other members of the panel, sources said.

"He was convinced by some members that a head count indicated strongly that the resolution to reconstitute the committee would

fail on the floor of the House if he remained," a source said. "He was shown figures. He felt there was nothing left for him to do but resign."

The source said Sprague would not retract his resignation even if asked. "It's unrevocable on his part."

Sprague was reported to be out of town and was not immediately available for comment.

His letter, addressed to Stokes and the other 10 members of the committee, said:

"I am hereby submitting my resignation, effective immediately, as chief counsel and staff director of the House Select Committee on Assassinations. I do so with the hope that the Congress can now proceed with the challenge of seeing that these investigations are pursued promptly."