

Slay Panel Meeting Canceled

WASHINGTON (UPI) — A climactic meeting of the dessionion-ridden House Assassinations Committee was canceled suddenly last night by the illness of the chairman, Rep. Henry Gonzalez, D-Tex.

Gonzalez, who is in a leadership struggle with his panel, reported to his Washington office he was ill with influenza at his home in San Antonio and would not be able to preside over a crucial meeting of the committee this afternoon.

That meeting was to have ended a series of procrastinations on a decision whether Gonzalez or Richard Sprague, the chief committee counsel he fired Feb. 10, would prevail, or perhaps whether both would go.

The illness was the latest development in the history of the committee set up last year to investigate the assassinations of John F. Kennedy and the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr.

A series of budget and procedural battles, and a change of chairmen as a result of last November's election, climaxed with Gonzales' dismissal of Sprague, and his refusal to go. Sprague was backed by letters from all other committee members.

Last Wednesday, the committee, after a six hour session on rules and procedure, forced a vote postponing a showdown on the Gonzalez-Sprague standoff until today.

Gonzalez, describing Sprague as a "prima donna" and "deceitful", said he fired the lawyer for unilaterally proposing a budget of \$13 million and a staff of 170 for the next two years and persistently obstructing authority.

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