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F. EDWARD HEBERT LES ASPIN
Issue of revival of Civil Defense Act

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Nixon 'Emergency' Powers Debated

Washington

Representative Les Aspin (Dem-Wis.) said yesterday he will ask the House Rules Committee to prevent revival of a 1950 law giving the President power to censor the press, seize private property and hamstring the courts if he declares a military attack on the nation is "anticipated."

Aspin said it is an "embarrassment to Congress" to bring out such a bill "at a time when we are in the midst of impeaching Richard Nixon for abusing the powers of his office."

Representative F. Edward Hebert (Dem-La.), chairman of the House Armed Services Committee, had tried to use a "suspension of the rules" to rush the bill to renew the federal Civil Defense Act through the House.

The procedure, normally reserved for noncontroversial legislation, sharply limits debate and bars amendment.

Aspin said that Hebert is seeking to "sneak" the renewal through the House after pushing it through his

committee without proper hearings or serious debate.

Hebert denied the charge in an interview and said Aspin is being "demagogic" and "trying to take advantage of this atmosphere created by the impeachment drive."

Hebert said he will bring the bill to the floor via the normal Rules Committee route.

Aspin said the act "extends virtual dictatorial powers for the President whenever he declares a civil defense emergency," and added, "It is extremely foolhardy as we proceed toward the impeachment of the President to extend for four years what amounts to autocratic powers."

The law, which expired June 30, gives the President the right to censor publications, mail and broadcasts, take control of vast economic sectors, including agriculture, industry and finance, seize private property and suspend judicial review of government actions.

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