

The Senators Are Bushed

Washington

Their eyelids droop and faces sag. Sometimes their tempers flare.

Early mornings and late nights, and 32 days of hearings during nine weeks have left their mark on the seven Watergate committee senators.

The senators and their staffs are plainly tired.

Three of them want to stop for a rest, but four want to continue working.

"When you see Chairman Ervin cock his elbow and poke Sam Dash in the ribs, he's not mad at him, he's just trying to keep him awake," one senator remarked of Senator Sam J. Ervin Jr. (Dem-N.C.) and Samuel Dash, the chief counsel.

HEARINGS

Since the Senate Watergate hearings opened last May 17 senators have examined 29 witnesses whose testimony is now spread in more than 6500 pages of official transcript.

The committee staff has conducted more than 200 private interviews with witnesses and potential witnesses.

It has sifted through thousands of pages of records and documents and recordings, and spent scores of thousands of hours trying to get answers to the constant

question of who, what, where, how and why.

"It's really hard to describe how tired the staff is," said Senator Howard H. Baker Jr. (Rep-Tenn.), who has been one of the main advocates of a month-long August recess.

"Everybody is snapping at everybody . . . and it's not a gauge of anything in my mind except how tired everybody is," said Baker.

REST

Baker and two other senators contended the country needs a rest from Watergate as much as they do. They said it would be far better to take an August vacation and come back fresh in September.

Senator Herman E. Talmadge (Dem-Fla.) and three other senators contended that no matter how tired people got, the hearings must go on without interruptions until the question of possible presidential involvement has been thoroughly explored.

The final vote to continue the hearings after Congress recesses August 3 was taken in private and the names of who voted which way were not released.

"After we voted to go on after a four to three vote, everybody started snarling at each other," said Baker.

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