

DASH SAYS ERVIN PLANS TO RESUME

Counsel Vows Continuation
of Watergate Hearings

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WASHINGTON, Jan. 28—

Despite widespread speculation that the Senate Watergate committee had held its last public session, Samuel Dash, the committee's chief counsel, insisted today that the hearings would resume and instructed his staff to continue to prepare for them.

The committee announced Saturday that two weeks of hearings, scheduled to begin tomorrow, would be postponed so they would not interfere with the selection of a jury in the forthcoming trial of former Attorney General John N. Mitchell and former Commerce Secretary Maurice H. Stans.

The decision to put off the hearings came after Paul J. Curran, United States Attorney for the Southern District of New York, called Senator Sam J. Ervin Jr., the committee chairman, Friday afternoon and asked that the committee's public proceedings be delayed until after a jury had been picked and sequestered.

The committee had decided, on a 4-to-3 party-line vote last Wednesday, to resume the hearings for two weeks. The three Republicans on the panel vigorously opposed the continuation.

Hearings Called Dead

Today, Republican staff members said they were sure that the hearings would never resume, and one Republican official called the chances for further public sessions "less than zero."

But at a staff meeting this afternoon, Mr. Dash said that he had been assured by Senator Ervin that hearings could begin as soon as a jury was selected in the Mitchell-Stans trial.

As if to emphasize their determination to continue, staff members today interrogated Robert A. Maheu, who had been scheduled as one of the first public witnesses this week. Mr. Maheu was once the closest confidant of Howard R. Hughes, the reclusive billionaire.

Mr. Mitchell and Mr. Stans are charged with perjury and obstruction of justice in connection with a campaign contribution from Robert L. Vesco, the financier who is now a fugitive in the Bahamas. Jury selection is scheduled to begin Feb. 19 in New York City and would probably last no more than a week.

That would mean that the committee could resume its public hearings the last week in February. The resolution creating the Senate panel provided that it should file its final report by the end of February, but there is little doubt that the Senate would grant the committee a limited extension of life to complete its hearings.

Florida Inquiry Delayed

WASHINGTON, Jan. 28 (UPI)—Florida officials bowed today to a request by the special Watergate prosecutor, Leon Jaworski, to stall their conspiracy investigation of key Watergate figures until after March 1.

Mr. Jaworski's request was seen as a further indication that major new Federal indictments were imminent. He has said the Watergate grand juries should be ready to act by the end of February.

The Florida inquiry is centering on the possibility that state conspiracy laws were violated when the Watergate bugging plot was allegedly approved at a meeting in Key Biscayne March 30, 1972.