

Panel's Decision Against Open Hearings Reportedly Linked to Jaworski Position

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WASHINGTON, June 3—The House Judiciary Committee's decision last week to put off public, televised hearings for the time being was influenced by Leon Jaworski, the special Watergate prosecutor, according to committee members and officials.

The sources said that Mr. Jaworski had told John M. Doar, the committee's special impeachment counsel, that immediate public hearings would create problems for his investigation.

James D. St. Clair, President Nixon's attorney, has repeatedly urged the committee to hold open sessions on the ground that the closed hearings have resulted in leaks that are unfair to the President.

The committee is temporarily turning its attention away from

the Watergate case and will begin closed hearings tomorrow on whether impeachable offenses arose from pledges of large 1972 campaign contributions by the International Telephone and Telegraph Corporation and dairy cooperatives.

The staff of the impeachment inquiry expects to spend most of this week presenting evidence to the committee members on these cases.

Then, the committee plans to move, also in closed session, to an examination of such other matters as President Nixon's underpayment of taxes and the operations of the secret White House investigations unit known as the "plumbers."

Representative Peter W. Rodino Jr., the committee chairman, suggested the week before last that the I.T.T. and milk hearings would be open and on television.

Last Thursday, however, Mr. Doar and the special minority counsel, Albert E. Jenner Jr., recommended against public sessions, and the committee, by a 23 to 15 vote, sustained their position.

Mr. Rodino was one of those opposing open hearings.

According to committee officials, Mr. Jaworski talked with Mr. Doar last week about the potential pretrial publicity that would be created if the committee made public all the Watergate evidence that it had heard in secret over the last month.

During the course of that conversation, sources said, Mr. Jaworski also said that immediate public hearings would create problems for him.

The officials emphasized that Mr. Jaworski had not directly asked the committee not to hold public hearings but had merely outlined his problems.

Mr. Rodino apparently passed this word along to some other committee members before the vote last week.

Top committee members who voted against holding open sessions said today that they had been influenced by Mr. Jaworski's position.

The nature of Mr. Jaworski's problems could not be learned, but one source speculated that his position could have been related to the plea-bargaining that was then under way with Charles W. Colson.

Mr. Colson, former White House special counsel, pleaded guilty today in United States District Court here to one count of obstruction of justice and

agreed to cooperate with authorities seeking further evidence.

At the White House, Mr. Colson was President Nixon's Liaison to special interest groups and had direct dealings with I.T.T. officials and milk producers.

Immunity is Cited

A source familiar with the operations of the special prosecutor's office said today that Mr. Jaworski was concerned that his investigation might be impaired if witnesses were given any form of immunity from prosecution to compel their testimony before the Judiciary Committee.

Committee officials said Mr. Jaworski's position was by no means the only reason for keeping the hearings closed.

Last week, Mr. Rodino said that some of the committee's evidence had been obtained in confidence and that it would be difficult and awkward to separate the confidential information from the rest. In addition, he and others cited the rules of the House that require testimony that might defame or degrade a third party to be held in private.

Another reason, stated by Mr. Jenner, was that Judge Gerhard A. Gesell, the judge in the upcoming trial of those allegedly involved in the burglary of the office of Dr. Daniel Ellsberg's former psychiatrist, was concerned that public testimony "on the eve of trial" could have an impact on selection of a jury.