

Confident Demos Plan Short Debate

Washington

House Democratic leaders, confident of a large pro-impeachment vote, plan to limit floor debate and voting on proposed impeachment articles to about 50 hours spread over a week or ten days.

That is half the time anticipated a little while ago.

Sources indicated yesterday that the Democratic leaders feel the case developed against President Nixon by the House Judiciary Committee is so strong that extended discussion on the House floor will be unnecessary.

Consideration of three impeachment articles recommended by the Judiciary Committee will begin August 19 at the latest — and possibly will get under way August 15, sources said.

Rules for debating, amending and voting on the charges against Mr. Nixon will be discussed this afternoon in a closed meeting of Democratic and Republican House leaders, the chairman and ranking minority member of the Judiciary Committee, the House parliamentarian and the entire Rules Committee.

The Rules Committee will meet next week to recommend House Adoption of Rules governing length of debate and the extent to which amendment of proposed articles will be permitted.

Representative B. F. Sisk (Dem.-Calif.), a Rules Committee member involved in the procedural discussions, said after meetings with House Speaker Carl Albert, Judiciary Committee

Peter W. Rodino Jr. (Dem.-N.J.) and other key Democratic leaders yesterday:

"They (Judiciary Committee members) are coming to

us with a case that I think frankly has the President cold turkey. I predict two-thirds of the House will vote for impeachment, and will all the other problems in the country I think it would be a shameful waste of time to carry on the debate indefinitely."

Thus, Sisk said, original plans of the House leadership for 100 hours of debate have been scrapped for a plan calling for 50 hours over a maximum of ten days.

"Otherwise," he said, "You can get into unlimited nit-picking and filibustering with the number of attorneys we've got in the House."

Sisk said he thought separate votes on each section of an article might be permitted but not changes in wording or the addition of sections.

"Basically, there ought to be just an up or down vote on the articles reported to us by the Judiciary Committee," he said.

Article 1 accuses Mr. Nixon of obstructing justice in the Watergate coverup, Article 2 alleges political use of the Internal Revenue Service and other abuses of power, and Article 3 recommends impeachment for the President's failure to comply with committee subpoenas.

Sisk said he thought the procedural rule might permit members to propose additional articles, for example ones on the secret Cambodia bombing and the President's taxes that were rejected by the Judiciary Committee Tuesday.

Whatever proposed rule is hammered out by House leaders today and approved by the Rules Committee next week must be adopted by a majority of the House before the impeachment debate opens.

One unanswered question is whether television cameras will be allowed into the House chamber. Speaker Albert and Democratic leader Thomas P. O'Neill (Dem.-Mass.) at first opposed telecasts but indicated Tuesday they would be amenable to the idea.

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