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Oct. 15 Halt To Hearings Seen Likely

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Despite objections from some members of the Senate Watergate committee staff, a majority of senators on the panel appears ready to vote that public hearing be terminated by Oct. 15.

According to interviews with committee members, all three Republicans on the committee and Sen. Herman E. Talmadge (D-Ga.) want public hearings to reconvene on Sept. 15 and then adjourn about a month later.

Some members of the staff of the Democratic majority yesterday expressed anger and alarm at the prospect of an Oct. 15 cutoff date, contending that it will permit only a cursory examination of the financing of President Nixon's campaign and its program of political 'dirty tricks.'

Sen. Howard Baker (R-Tenn.), the committee vice chairman, said all the senators favored an early cutoff date during a closed-door,

See COMMITTEE, A17, Col. 5

COMMITTEE, From A1

executive session yesterday. "There seemed to be a full committee consensus hoping to wind up about Oct. 15 or Nov. 1," Baker said.

He also said that the seven committee members are likely to divide into two subcommittees, one to investigate and hold public hearings on the "dirty tricks" and the other to probe campaign financing.

The exact timing and division of the investigation will be decided when the senators return from recess in September. However, the first phase of the committee probe—the inquiry into the Watergate bugging and cover-up—is not complete and will occupy the first days of the public hearings that will resume next month.

The uncertain future of the committee's investigation reflects the growing tension between senators on the panel and their investigative staff, according to reliable sources.

Several of the senators, weary from their long days under the hot glare of television lights, have said privately that they believe the hearings could result in a "backlash" of public opinion if they continue much

longer and foster the impression that the committee is "out to get" President Nixon.

Many members of the staff, however, assert that inadequate questioning on the part of the senators is responsible for any "backlash" effect, and say that the senators have failed to adequately pursue leads developed by committee attorneys.

Now, these staff members say, the senators are prepared to all but ignore the information developed for the second and third phases of the investigation: campaign financing and dirty tricks.

One key staff attorney said: "The senators are getting bored with the hearings. The Watergate bugging (and cover-up) involved a narrow and definable group of people in an extraordinary crime ... but the 'dirty tricks' and campaign financing touch every politician ... we detect a new shyness on those subjects."

In interviews, the senators denied that they were bored, but noted that they now have to contend with more than 7,000 pages of testimony riddled with contradictions.

Sen. Lowell P. Weicker

(R-Conn.) said he tentatively favors completing public hearings by Oct. 15 because, "We can't give the impression that the hearings are being dragged out to hurt certain people or for partisan purposes."

Three key staff members said they have developed new information on questionable campaign contributions by some of the President's close friends and supporters.

"There's material on the network of Nixon campaign spies, the 'plumbers' and the political work of the Internal Revenue Service that will slip between the cracks unless we have the time," one staffer said.

The term "plumbers" is a reference to a White House special investigations unit that made inquiries into news leaks and was responsible for the 1971 burglary of the office of Daniel Ellsberg's psychiatrist.

The staff sources complained that the senators have not asked for a report on these staff findings and do not understand their significance in the context of the 1972 presidential campaign.

Sen. Baker yesterday took a less pessimistic view of the future of the committee. "The committee is already a suc-

cess," he said. "It's just a question of how much of a success, of sorting out the facts ... though the findings now appear hazy, we got more information than I expected to get."

Several Democratic staff members and two senators criticized Baker's role in the investigation. Said one senator: "His questioning is soft. He's trying to get himself back into the good graces of the Republican Party."

The senator also criticized Fred Thompson, the minority counsel. "Thompson is known for his pro-White House questions, just listen."

Baker, appraised of that criticism, said he has taken a middle line that does not sit well with activists. "As I've said from the beginning," Baker said, "my job is to grab the facts and run, to steer the middle of the road in fairness to everyone."

Paris to Double Parking Rates

PARIS, Aug. 7 (UPI) — Come October, Parisians will be paying double to park their cars on the street — if they can find a space.

Monday, the city announced that Oct. 1 the meter rate will go up from half a franc (12 cents) to one franc (25 cents) for 30 minutes.