

Ervin Committee May Fill In

Washington

The leaders of the Senate Watergate committee suggested yesterday that the panel may try to take up some of the slack left by the firing of special prosecutor Archibald Cox and expand its investigation of the Watergate scandal.

Chairman Sam Ervin (Dem.-N.C.) said the committee might delve more deeply into campaign financing than it had originally intended, in order to bring greater public attention to an area that was being investigated by Cox's office.

Ervin also said that "there will probably be a genuine effort on the part of Congress to take and set up a special prosecutor under special law."

TESTIFY

Vice chairman Howard H. Baker Jr. (Rep.-Tenn.), in a telephone interview, said it was "certainly not beyond the realm of possibility" that Cox himself would be called to testify before the Watergate committee.

It was Ervin and Baker who on Friday night accept-

ed President Nixon's offer to turn over to the committee summaries of tape recordings of White House conversations relating to the Watergate affair that had been subpoenaed by the committee.

Cox had refused Mr. Nixon's offer of the summaries, and said he would ignore the President's order to stop pursuing the tapes issue any further in the courts. Cox was fired Saturday night.

LOOK

Baker said yesterday that "in the absence of the special prosecutor and in anticipating the eventual acquisition of transcripts," the committee "may be inclined to look with greater care into certain areas."

Once the White House turns over the tape documents, Baker said, "this

may lead to the calling of further witnesses, and the recall of previous witnesses and this is likely to extend the hearings."

Baker said all of his comments were "the rankest speculation on my part" because he said he has not talked with any committee members over the weekend.

Ervin first made his suggestion that the committee might expand its work and that Congress might move to set up its own special prosecutor at a fund-raising party Saturday night in Asheville, N.C.

He was not available yesterday.

The committee had planned to resume its public Watergate inquiry on October 30. An aide said that barring additional developments, Ervin probably will hold a closed executive session that day, before the public session resumes, to decide the committee's future course.

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