

Public TV to Cover Watergate On Delayed Nightly Basis

By LES BROWN

With the three commercial networks having discontinued their daily television pool of the Senate Watergate hearings, the National Public Affairs Center for Television in Washington has set up its own installation to resume coverage this week over the Public Broadcasting Service.

Because of daytime programming commitments at most public television stations, however, the N.P.A.C.T. service will be a delayed video-taped feed in the evening. WNET/Channel 13, as the P.B.S. affiliate in New York, will carry the hearings at 8 P.M. tonight, 8:30 P.M. tomorrow and 9 P.M. on Thursday, on a gavel-to-gavel basis.

Municipal station WNYC-TV, Channel 31, has planned to pick up the N.P.A.C.T. coverage live during the day at 10 A.M. and in addition will carry the night time telecast along with WNET.

The cost of covering the

hearings without benefit of the commercial networks' pool will cost N.P.A.C.T. an estimated total of \$16,000 a day, according to a source there, or about 30 per cent more than previous Watergate coverage had cost the noncommercial network.

The decision to return to coverage, in spite of the added financial burden, was made in the interest of continuity, Al Vecchione, N.P.A.C.T. general manager, said.

"Some elements of the proceedings are less dynamic than others, but we think that that determination is best left to historians," he commented.

The commercial networks had discontinued pool coverage, in spite of ratings that might have been considered encouraging if Watergate were an advertising-supported show, because the "celebrity" level of the witnesses had declined. Network spokesmen had commented that the pool might be reactivated if important headline-making witnesses were called.

'Dirty Tricks' Phase

Today's phase of the hearings is to be given over largely to witnesses testifying to political "dirty tricks" by Democrats. Among those scheduled are Mike Heller of Los Angeles, who was reportedly involved in the distribution of leaflets; Truman Campbell, of the California Rally of Farm Workers; Jeremiah Sullivan, of the Boston Police Department, and Representative Tim Lee Carter, Republican of Kentucky.

The witnesses tomorrow and Thursday are categorized by N.P.A.C.T. as concerned with "White House and Committee to Re-elect the President efforts to politicize the Government." They are scheduled to include William Marumoto, who was involved in professional recruiting and later became a staff assistant to President Nixon; John J. Priestes, a Miami contractor, and Ben Fernandez, who was with the Hispanic finance committee of the committee.