

Ervin: With Dean tapes, probe could end

Associated Press

CHARLOTTE (N.C.) — Sen. Sam J. Ervin Jr. said yesterday if the White House would give the Senate Watergate committee five tapes of conversations involving John W. Dean III, the committee might bring its investigation "to a speedy end."

In a further indication that Ervin is willing to compromise with the White House on this committee's subpoena of hundreds of other tapes and documents, the North Carolina Democrat said:

"If we found the Dean tapes hadn't been doctored, there were no gaps in them, I'd be inclined to say that we bring the hearings to a speedy end." Ervin said during a

television interview.

"If the White House is willing to surrender any tapes, I would suggest they surrender these tapes."

According to the testimony of John Dean, these five tapes . . . will reveal whether or not John Dean, testified truthfully before the committee when he testified that these conversations indicated that President Nixon had knowledge of the Watergate coverup." Ervin said last Monday.

The Watergate committee is due to die in February, and there have been reports the White House would oppose any attempt to continue the committee.

Ervin's committee subpoenaed the tapes and docu-

ments December 19, but received a flat turnaround January 4 in a letter delivered to Ervin by a White House aide.

Last July, the Watergate committee went to U.S. District Court in an attempt to obtain the five key tapes of conversations between Nixon and Dean.

U.S. District Court Judge John J. Sirica dismissed the suit on grounds his court lacked jurisdiction to decide whether the committee was entitled to them or whether, as the White House contended, they were protected from disclosure by executive privilege.

Congress later passed a law giving the court's jurisdiction in the dispute, and the suit was revived. It is still pending in Sirica's court.