

# Byrd's Long View Of Impeachment

Washington

Senate Democratic whip Robert C. Byrd (Dem-W. Va.) said yesterday that a Senate vote on whether to oust President Nixon from office probably won't take place before the November, 1974, elections, and might well be delayed until 1975, because of presidential "tactics of resistance and delay."

Moreover, Byrd said that if it appears the final Senate vote would take place just before the election, it might well be wise to consider whether to postpone it, for fear the closeness to election "could have an impact on how senators vote."

If Byrd's forecasts are correct, it could be sweet music to many embattled senators seeking re-election, particularly among Republicans, who dread to have to vote yes or no on Mr. Nixon before election day lest it blast their chances of victory.

Under the Constitution, the House must first vote a bill of impeachment—similar to an indictment—by a majority vote before the is-

sue can proceed to trial. Only if two-thirds of the Senate votes to convict would the President be ousted from office.

Byrd declared in an interview that, assuming the House votes a bill of impeachment for trial by the Senate, "I would say the trial is not going to be over before the election."

The powerful Democratic whip, who has carefully studied the Senate rules on impeachment charges and has read the recently released White House transcripts of taped conversations, also said, "The Senate trial could conceivably spill over to 1975 because of the President's tactics of resistance and delay."

Byrd said the delay could result not only from holdups due to White House refusal to provide the House Judiciary Committee with materials it has demanded, but from added delays in the Senate to give President Nixon time to prepare his defense and to give the Senate time to take testimony from witnesses if needed.

Washington Post