

# House Debate Pushed Back

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The timetable for beginning the House floor debate on impeachment has slipped a few days, Majority Leader Thomas P. (Tip) O'Neill (D-Mass.) said yesterday.

Because the Judiciary Committee is taking longer than expected to complete its action on articles of impeachment, the House Democratic leader said, debate on the floor is likely to begin Aug. 15, rather than Aug. 12.

O'Neill said Judiciary Chairman Peter W. Rodino Jr. (D-N.J.) asked for the additional time to "prepare the case" after it gets out of the Rules Committee, where a hearing is now expected to be held on Aug. 7 instead of Aug. 5.

Despite the pushback of the starting date, O'Neill said it was "still a possibility" that the vote on impeachment might be taken Aug. 23 or 24.

Rodino originally thought the House might need as many as 100 hours to debate and act on the articles, but after talking with the minority members of his committee Rodino said he thought it might take only about 60 hours. By working Saturday and from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. each day, O'Neill said, the House might be able to keep the original Aug. 24 target date for voting.

O'Neill said Rodino had asked to be given till Aug. 19 to prepare the floor arguments, but the leadership urged him to be ready by the 15th.

Meanwhile both House and Senate Democratic leaders said yesterday that television coverage of the House debate and the Senate trial now seems "inevitable."

O'Neill said Rodino and some Republican members of the Judiciary Committee were "reluctant" or opposed to having the debate on the floor televised, but he did not say why. He said 103 House members have signed a

petition passed around by Rep. Sidney Yates (D-Ill.) to allow TV coverage.

Though Speaker Carl Albert refused to take a position on the matter, he did say, "I do believe the proceedings ought to be preserved for history. If you don't televise it live, at least it should be recorded — presumably on video tape. But Albert agreed that live coverage was probably inevitable.

In the Senate, Majority Leader Mike Mansfield (D-Mont.) and Majority Whip Robert Byrd (D-W.Va.) introduced a resolution to permit television coverage. The resolution will be referred to the Rules Committee, which might take up the matter today.

The Republican Policy Committee in the Senate is split on the issue but a majority seemed to support TV coverage at least in a limited form which might prevent panning of the cameras around the chamber.

House Republican leaders generally support the move to televise the House proceedings, with third-ranking Republican John Anderson of Illinois strongly backing it.

Speaker Albert said he opposes televising the hearings at which the Rules Committee will establish the procedures and time limits for the House debate.

O'Neill, a former Rules committee member offered his own idea of what form the floor procedure might take. The Majority Leader said he would favor a rule allowing members to amend the committee's articles.

O'Neill's suggestion would probably limit the number of changes proposed, and would prevent members from trying to pick apart the language or substance of the committee's work.

Another procedural question: how to divide the debate time between committee members and members at large who want to speak.

O'Neill said nothing has been decided yet.