

Final Vote Set For August 31

Washington

Amid growing indications that House Republican leader John J. Rhodes will support impeachment of President Nixon, the House leadership tentatively agreed yesterday to a timetable for a final vote by August 31—a week later than its original goal.

Rhodes scheduled a news conference for Monday to announce what aides called his “agonized” decision.

A moderate Republican said Rhodes’ defection from the ranks of Nixon supporters, if it happens, would have a “profound effect” on the outcome of the House vote.

Rhodes, with other Republican and Democratic leaders, top members of the Judiciary Committee and the full membership of the House Rules Committee, met to discuss House procedure for the momentous impeachment debate.

Representative B. F. Sisk (Dem-Fresno), Democratic whip, said the group reached tentative agreement to begin consideration on August 19, with a vote on the

first article by August 26 or 27 and a final vote by August 31.

Speaker Carl Albert originally hoped to start debating by August 13, with a final vote by August 24.

An aide, meanwhile, said that if Rhodes supports impeachment, he will step down as GOP leader in favor of a Nixon supporter until the issue is decided in the House.

Rhodes has been the Republican leader seven months.

He was elected to the leadership post vacated when Gerald R. Ford became vice president last December.

But he is well liked, and Representative Charles W. Whalen Jr. (Rep-Ohio) said his support for impeachment would have “a profound effect on all the members — liberals, conservatives, whatever.”

In advance of his decision, Rhodes has been holding a series of meetings this week, attempting to talk privately with all 187 House Republicans before making his announcement.

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