

Aug. 19 Seen for Debate

Closed Rule Would Ban Amendments

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The House will probably begin debating the impeachment of President Nixon Aug. 19 under a closed rule that would prohibit amendments to the articles of impeachment, House leaders indicated yesterday.

A plan that appeared to have satisfied the leadership calls for the proceedings to open with 55 hours of general debate, followed by 32 hours more of argument on motions offered from the floor.

The final vote to impeach Mr. Nixon on the three articles proposed by the House Judiciary Committee would come before Labor Day.

These were the essential procedural points worked out in a private two-hour meeting yesterday of the House Rules Committee, leaders of both parties and the chairman and ranking Republican member of the Judiciary Committee.

No formal agreement on the procedures will be reached until next week, but those present at yesterday's discussion said a consensus was reached on the main points.

Rep. John B. Anderson (R-Ill.), a member of the Rules Committee told reporters after the meeting that a consensus also appeared to have been reached on permitting live television coverage, "gavel to gavel," of the first presidential impeachment debate on the House floor since 1868.

The rule under which the articles of impeachment would go to the floor would allow very little maneuverability for either opponents or proponents of impeachment.

Member would be allowed only to introduce amend-

ments to eliminate an article or a particular paragraph in an article. They could not amend any article with new language and they could not introduce a new article.

That type of rule would bar the strategy planned by some Democrats anxious to prevent elimination of a charge that Mr. Nixon should be impeached for defying Judiciary Committee subpoenas.

The committee approved three articles. Article I charges the President with engaging in a course of conduct that produced the

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Watergate cover-up. Article II accuses him of misusing executive powers to violate citizen's rights. Article III contains the defiance of subpoena charge.

The third article was approved by a narrow vote in the committee, and some Democrats fear the full House will not vote to retain it. Some of them had planned to assure passage of the charge by striking out the third article and amending it into Article I. That could not be done under the closed rule generally agreed on yesterday.

It was Judiciary Committee Chairman Peter W. Rodino's view that no articles should be considered except those that had been discussed by the committee during its six days of debate.

However, the proposed rule would also prevent introduction of the two articles which were discussed but not approved by the committee—ones dealing with the secret bombing of Cambodia and President Nixon's personal income taxes.

Anderson said the leadership yesterday also appeared to frown on a suggestion that they permit a motion to recommit the articles of impeachment with instructions to replace them with a motion merely censuring President Nixon for misconduct.

The idea of replacing impeachment with censure has been pressed recently by conservative Republicans, who argue that impeachment is too drastic a punishment for the crimes alleged.

It was suggested in the meeting yesterday by Rep. Delbert Latta (R-Ohio), a defender of the President who

is a member of both the Rules and Judiciary committees. The leadership did not appear to favor it, Anderson said, although House Minority Leader John J. Rhodes (R-Ariz.) indicated his support of it.

Anderson said he also favored allowing such a recommittal motion to be made. "But by saying that I don't mean to imply I would vote for it," he said.

The next step in the impeachment process is to bring the articles and the committee's final report before the Rules Committee Aug. 13.

Formal debate would start Aug. 19—four days later than had been previously planned. The delay is necessary because of time needed for the committee staff to prepare its report.

When the debate opens, there would be one hour at the beginning to debate the rule. Then would come 55 hours of general debate on impeachment.

After that, according to the schedule discussed yesterday, there would be 32 hours motions on the articles. It would permit 15 hours on Article I, 11 hours on Article II and six hours on Article III.

The House would probably meet from 9 A.M. to 6 P.M., according to Rep. Ray J. Madden (D-Ind.), chairman of the Rules Committee.

Anderson said there is an "iron-clad promise" that the final votes will be over by the end of August. Madden said the agreement was to conclude by Labor Day, Sept. 2.

Anderson said there also is general sympathy in the house for taking the final votes by a roll call, with each member personally calling out "aye" or "nay," instead of with the new electronic voting system.

"There is something more personal about responding to your name being called than simply pushing a card in a slot," Anderson said.

The meeting seems to have ended any doubts about whether the proceedings would be presented on television. "There was a general feeling in favor of gavel-to-gavel live coverage," Anderson said.

The television cameras would be restricted to areas encompassing the well of the House floor, the speaker's rostrum and the tables where opposing managers of the debate will sit, Ander-