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## Uranium Trial Start Delayed

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## Uranium Trial Start Delayed

U.S. District Judge Robert R. Merhige Jr. has agreed to continue a jury trial that had been scheduled to begin Monday involving Westinghouse Electric Corp. and three electric utilities in Kansas Gas & Electric Co., Union Electric Co. of St. Louis and Consolidated Edison Co. of New York.

The three companies sued Westinghouse after it canceled their uranium supply contracts in September 1975, but the three had decided not to join the 19 other utilities that went to trial before Merhige on the same issue two years ago.

Lewis T. Booker, counsel for Kansas Gas, said yesterday afternoon that the parties had requested "a slight continuance" because settlement negotiations are being conducted. The participants, he said, simply felt that the settlement talks could not be pursued at the same time a trial was being held.

Booker, who was retained by Kansas Gas after having represented Virginia Electric last at a hearing Monday morning. The delay, he said, probably will be in the range of 30 to 45 days.

The Richmond lawyer said Dean William B. Spong Jr. of the College of William and Mary law school had supported the re-

quest for a continuance. Spong is serving as Merhige's special settlement negotiator in their uranium contract disputes.

Not counting the amounts of uranium that they received as a result of an allocation order signed by Merhige in February 1978, the three companies are seeking the following amounts from Westinghouse: Union Electric, 10.4 million pounds; Kansas Gas, 3.3 million pounds; and Con Ed, 2 million pounds.

The trial had been scheduled to be heard by a six-member jury with four alternates.