

On tape

Mitchell Would Agree to Pro

By William Chapman
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Attorney General John N. Mitchell said last night that he would not object to legislation protecting news reporters' notes from being subpoenaed in legal proceedings.

Mitchell acknowledged in a television interview that the confidentiality of information obtained by reporters contributes to the dissemination of news.

He also said there are no militant groups that pose a se-

rious threat to the American form of government, a statement that seemingly conflicts with at least one Justice Department policy regarding wiretapping.

Mitchell was interviewed by Mike Wallace of CBS and was asked if he would like to see a law passed guaranteeing the confidentiality of reporters' notes. "I would have no problem with that," he answered, even though in some instances it might "impair the administration of justice."

That seemed to reflect a difference of opinion within the Justice Department because early this year U.S. attorneys sought subpoenas for reporters' notes and film clips in investigations of Black Panthers and white radical groups in Chicago and San Francisco.

The department was widely criticized by news media, which contended that sources of news would be cut off if reporters could be forced to divulge confidential information.

In San Francisco, a Justice Department lawyer argued that a New York Times reporter should be required to testify before a grand jury investigating the Black Panthers. However, a U.S. district judge ruled that the reporter should not be required to reveal confidential information in the absence of "an overriding national interest."

Mitchell said in February that demanding information from newsmen without first trying to negotiate an agree-

Protect Newsmen's Notes

ment would be a violation of department practice.

The attorney general did not discuss specific legislation. Rep. Richard L. Ottinger (D-N.Y.) and Sen. Thomas McIntyre (D-N.H.) have introduced a bill protecting reporters' information, with the exception for national security and libel cases involving public officials.

On the subject of militant domestic organizations, Mitchell said, "Generally, I would say that I don't believe that

there is any militant group in this country that is a real threat to the United States as far as its institutions are concerned, or as far as the continuation of our form of government."

He agreed that such groups "don't have the muscle, either by numbers or any of the other requirements that would be necessary to materially affect our government."

Some violence-prone groups are "extremely disruptive," he

said, but their actions "will have no long-term effect on the continuance of our government."

That appeared to conflict with the department's present wiretapping policies as advocated in court. In at least one case, Mitchell has advocated legalized eavesdropping "to protect the nation from attempts by domestic organizations to use unlawful means to attack and subvert the existing structure of government."

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Vancouver to Get Newspapers Again

VANCOUVER, B.C., May 12 (AP)—Vancouver's two daily newspapers will be back on the streets Friday.

Pacific Press Ltd., which produces the morning Province and the evening Sun, Monday ratified a contract with its five employee unions and said it will resume publication Friday, exactly three months from the date publication was suspended.