

Access by Mollenhoff To Tax Data Opposed

By Eve Edstrom
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Top members of Congress' tax-writing committees will meet this week on special presidential counsel Clark Mollenhoff whether should be stripped of authority to examine individual income tax returns, Sen. Albert Gore (D-Tenn.), disclosed yesterday.

During an interview on the television program "Face the Nation" (CBS, WTOP), Gore said it was "wrong" for the Nixon administration to have given Mollenhoff access to the records.

Gore, third-ranking Democrat on the Senate Finance Committee, said he did not know whether legislative action would be recommended after leaders of the Senate committee and the House

Ways and Means Committee meet on the issue or whether the matter would be taken up with the White House.

It has been unclear whether Mr. Nixon officially authorized the Internal Revenue Service to make available the tax returns to Mollenhoff, or whether there is a tacit agreement between the White House and the IRS.

"Political Operator"

Gore said that while Mollenhoff is an "estimable gentleman," he is a "political operator," and, therefore, it is neither proper nor legal for him to examine tax returns.

On Saturday, Lawrence F. O'Brien, chairman of the Democratic National Committee, and three other prominent Democrats declared that Mollenhoff's access to the records violates federal tax laws pro-

tecting the privacy of income tax returns.

In response, Rep. Rogers C. B. Morton (R-Md.), chairman of the GOP National Committee, urged Mr. Nixon yesterday to "press ahead" with the scrutiny of tax records, and accused the Democrats of wanting to institute an "Operation Cover-up" to conceal tax records of certain office-holders and their associates.

Seen As Target

Discussing other matters on yesterday's program, Gore said that he was the Republicans' "target No. 1" in senatorial elections this fall.

He acknowledged that his votes against President Nixon's two Southern nominees to the Supreme Court hurt his prospects but claimed that the administration's economic policies were unifying Democrats in his support.