

Specter is Grilled at C.A. 'Lunch Rap' Talk

By BEN GINSBERG

Speaking Friday at the Christian Association's "lunch rap," Philadelphia District Attorney Arlen Specter discovered just how much easier it is to ask questions than to have to answer them.

Appearing under the auspices of the Ripon Society, a national organization of liberal Republicans, the city administration's only elected Republican official was for an hour fiercely crossed-examined by 70 students and faculty members.

Specter came under fire from various quarters during the course of the discussion, and was challenged on topics ranging from his role in the Warren Commission investigations to his responsibility for the 22-month delay of the Fraser-Borgmann conspiracy trial.

Robert Moss, president of the local Ripon Society, introduced the district attorney as a Republican who is not "the Nixon-Agnew type." Following this introduction, Specter spoke for several minutes on the operations of his office, his views on the problems of the cities, and on such projects as President Nixon's revenue sharing plan.

However during the next 55 minutes, Specter was subjected to a heavy barrage of pointed questions concerning his role as district attorney and as a Philadelphia politician.

Richard Borgmann, who almost two years ago was indicted on charges of conspiracy and possession of explosives, asked Specter why his trial had been continually postponed ever since April 1969. At that time Borgmann and Steve Fraser, two young socialists who are members of the National Caucus of Labor Committees, were taken in a police raid on their apartment. Their trial date has been superseded twice since early January because of the failure of the district attorney's office to file a brief

on a defense motion to suppress the warrant that allowed the police to make the raid.

"Why," Borgmann asked the district attorney, "has our trial been pending for two years while people threaten to blow up the Liberty Bell. How can you allow dangerous criminals like us to roam the streets?" he asked sarcastically. "If the charges against us are true, why has our case been delayed so long?"

Specter looked at the shine on his shoes for a long moment and finally replied, "I don't know. I can't remember your case. But I assure you I would have no hesitancy in bringing your case to trial immediately."

But a student quickly challenged Specter, saying, "Why don't you initiate an element of honesty here? Why not just admit to us that you do remember the specifics of this case?"

"I don't know anything about it," Specter shot back. "I don't know

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anything about this case and if you don't believe it I really just don't care," the irritated official declared.

Specter came under attack from another student who charged that the district attorney had lectured on grammatical propriety to a crowd of protestors who gathered at City Hall Wednesday to demonstrate against the shooting of a retarded youth by a policeman.

The questioner accused Specter, who had chastised the crowd for using foul language, of "arrogance of power in lecturing those people on their choice of language. Your job is not grammarian of City Hall," the student concluded.

The 1951 University graduate was charged by another observer with having been negligent in his role as an investigator for the Warren Commission's report on the Kennedy assassination.

The student making the accusation, said that the doctor who had performed the autopsy on the body of the late President had burned his first draft card, but had never been asked

for an explanation of this action by Specter.

Specter replied that he had been satisfied with the doctor's testimony.

Inevitably, the Republican was asked about the role he intended to play in the upcoming Philadelphia mayoralty race.

"I will not run for mayor," Specter declared. "I have not been asked to run by President Nixon or anyone in Washington."

"Are you disappointed you haven't been asked?" someone shouted.

"Because you're not running for mayor, does it mean that you are satisfied with the way Philadelphia is being run?" another student asked.

"No," Specter replied.

Commenting on the performance of police, commissioner-turned-mayoralty candidate Frank Rizzo, Specter said, "He's been an outstanding police commissioner, but I don't want to get involved in his candidacy."

"Is running the police department like running the city?" Specter was asked.

"Well," he hesitated, looking down at the carpet, "ther are some similarities and some differences."

Carry