

Impeachment Is Doubted by Saxbe

By Susanna McBee

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Attorney General William B. Saxbe said yesterday he does not think President Nixon will be impeached.

"Unless they come up with things I'm not aware of, I don't think he will be," Saxbe told reporters at a briefing in his conference room. "They" referred to Watergate Special Prosecutor Leon Jaworski and the House Judiciary Committee, which is considering impeachment.

Saxbe, however, admitted he has received no status report on the Watergate investigation from Jaworski and has had no contact with the committee.

His conclusion that Mr. Nixon will not be impeached was the same as that voiced by former Attorney General Elliot L. Richardson Tuesday in Dallas. "The evidence won't show direct criminal involvement in a criminal act, that he knew in advance of the Watergate break-in, or participated in the cover-up," Richardson said.

However, Sen. Edward M. Kennedy (D-Mass.) said yesterday there is increasing probability that Mr. Nixon will be impeached. Kennedy spoke to a conference on the influence of money on politics sponsored by the Citizens Research Foundation.

Saxbe commented, "I personally don't question what Jerry Ford said—that if they were so inclined, they could impeach him because they

don't like his necktie. But I think the House would be reluctant to go down this road if they didn't think the charge could be upheld in the Senate."

Vice President Gerald R. Ford said in 1970, when he was House Republican leader in an effort to impeach Supreme Court Justice William O. Douglas: "An impeachable offense is whatever a majority of the House of Representatives considers it to be at a given moment in history."

Ford has said recently that he was referring only to the impeachment of a federal judge, who is appointed for life on good behavior, and that the House must determine in such cases what constitutes a breach of good behavior.

On another subject, Saxbe raised questions about a section of the Justice Department's bill to regulate criminal information collected by police and the FBI.

The Attorney General referred to a provision that would require the sealing of arrest records seven years after a person's release from prison or probation in felony cases and five years after release in misdemeanor cases.

"I'm not at all sure this is good," Saxbe said of the provision. He noted that under the bill, a police officer would be subject to criminal penalties if he released information from a record that had been sealed, but a newspaper could publish

the same information that is contained in old news clippings.

Saxbe said he is "not against" the sealing provision. "I think we can live with it," but he added, "It could be that I'll change my mind."

He also said he would "welcome" legislation to overhaul the Law Enforcement Assistance Administration, which was created in 1968 and which has given about \$3.5 billion in grants to state and local police to improve law enforcement.

"We're still pumping money into a system that's not doing the job," Saxbe said, referring to increasing crime and overcrowded court dockets.

Saxbe said he would like to see the LEAA give extra money to a state willing to set up "innovative procedures" to improve the criminal justice system. "I'm not dissatisfied with LEAA," he explained. "I'm dissatisfied with criminal justice procedures in most states."

He said he would like to see states undertake such innovations as limiting the time between arrest and trial, permitting lateral transfers of police, establishing uniform police pay scales, providing well-paid full-time district attorneys, aiding courts in keeping dockets current, and improving rehabilitation and parole procedures.

Saxbe pointed out that when he was in the Senate, he and

Sens. Edward W. Brooke (R-Mass.), Thomas F. Eagleton (D-Mo.), and Walter F. Mondale (D-Minn.) introduced a bill costing \$4 billion a year to overhaul the LEAA program. A model LEAA program set up in Delaware or Nebraska, both of which have expressed interest, "wouldn't cost much," Saxbe said.