

Saxbe Calls Watergate

A 'Cloud'

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(UPI) Attorney General William B. Saxbe today called Watergate "the greatest cloud in our history" and warned that the nation might not be able to surmount another scandal of such dimensions.

The former Ohio Republican senator made his most extensive comment on Watergate since becoming Attorney General last January in a speech at commencement exercises at the Ohio State University law school.

"We now live under what I believe historians will conclude is the greatest cloud in our history," Saxbe said.

The scandal that has engulfed high public officials and subjected the President to an impeachment inquiry must become a "watershed" for morality in public life, Saxbe said, because "the next Watergate may grow to dimensions that would prove to be insurmountable."

The balances of power in

government, which textbooks emphasize, must be bolstered by "unrelenting public scrutiny" over public officials to keep corruption out, he said.

Without mentioning any Watergate defendants by name, Saxbe said not all officials who misbehave are "merely colorful rascals . . . some are men of finely distilled evil who would do irreparable damage to our freedom."

Citing historic scandals from the Whisky Ring in the Grant administration to Teapot Dome in the Harding administration, Saxbe said, "What is astounding is not only the amount of corruption the nation has tolerated but how quickly it seems to forget

"Saxbe said it is not enough "to periodically rise up and throw the rascals out—rascals should not be put in positions of trust in the first place."

"We are either truthful or not truthful," he said. "We are either honest or dishonest. We are either moral or immoral. And it really doesn't take much soul-searching to know which is which."

Saxbe said one good effect of Watergate has been diminished political pressure at every level of government.

"To cite one example, the White House is not trying to get the Department of Justice to do anything for political purposes. Believe me, it wasn't always like that."