

Saxbe on Tour in Defense

Star News 6/26/74

Atty. Gen. William B. Saxbe has embarked on an unprecedented speaking campaign in which he is preaching a homespun, common-sense philosophy designed to restore the nation's faith in its system of justice.

By the end of this month, Saxbe will have made 13 speeches, from the District of Columbia to Coeur d'Alene, Idaho, hammering on a theme of fairness, high morality and "no more 'dirty tricks,' not by anybody for any reason."

Since the first of the month, Saxbe has criticized the President for passing on grand jury information to his White House aides, complained about the double standard of justice for rich and poor (before the current furor over the suspended sentence given former

Atty. Gen. Richard G. Kleindienst), blasted J. Edgar Hoover for running a dirty tricks operation against the New Left and warned businessmen against unethical practices.

His first sharp criticism of the Watergate morality came in ad lib remarks added at the end of a prepared speech to a group of southern state attorneys general in Williamsburg, Va., on May 6. It was the first time Saxbe spoke of Watergate as the "greatest cloud in our history" and it brought his audience to their feet cheering.

Since then, Saxbe has developed that theme and added new elements, laying out his personal view of the way justice should operate in this country.

In some respects, his views are controversial. He favors capital punishment, for example. In other respects, they would make basic changes in the way the Justice Department has been run. He wants, for example, to bring the FBI under tighter control of the attorney general.

But to a large extent, the Saxbe philosophy appears to be an attempt to reach back to American traditions of fairness and morality and to "fashion new ways — much better ways — of carrying out matters of the public trust."

He seems to be saying what he thinks a Watergate-weary public wants to hear and, in the process, changing his own shoot-from-the-lip image.

Here, taken from recent Saxbe speeches and two lengthy interviews with newsmen, are quotations illustrating the evolving Saxbe philosophy of justice:

FAIRNESS

"In a sense, we all walk a razor's edge — both as individuals and as a society. It



—Associated Press

ATTY. GEN. WILLIAM SAXBE

is our devotion to decency and fairness — our devotion to the law — that keeps us from straying into tyranny.

"Fairness is most needed when it is in short supply or when a problem assumes such great proportions that we are tempted to resolve it through expediency outside of the law.

"It is hardly reassuring when one man goes to prison for years for theft while another man involved in a conspiracy to steal our freedoms is in and out of jail in the wink of an eye."

"In order to be truly effective, the policeman, like the criminal justice

system he represents, must also be fair. Not just a little fair or fair only some of the time. The policeman has to be totally fair — and all for the time."

MORALITY

"Watergate should be the watershed for morality for all public officials, both elected and appointed.

"That word — morality — seems suddenly popular today — as it always should have been. One of the nation's great tasks is to see that it remains that way.

"The road of reform and responsibility lies open to us. It is a high road, a road that can be followed only by

of Justice

adhering to some old-time truths. And that includes honor and ethics and, yes, morality."

REFORM OF THE FBI

"I think the problem over the last 30 years has been that it hasn't been responsible enough to the elected officials. I think that the problem has been that under J. Edgar Hoover they build up an independence, where they didn't look to the Congress, to the President; they lived within themselves. . .

"Faced with sobering examples from the recent past, I am confident that future attorneys general and future directors of the FBI will diligently to prevent improprieties from becoming part of official policy."

JURY REFORM

"Now on the jury — there's no reason that we shouldn't select and seat a jury within three or four hours. They do it every day in Britain. And yet we have permitted as high as 30 or 40 peremptory challenges — that's for no reason at all — unlimited challenges for cause."

"Now, it seems to me that we're going to have to review this, and because it's locked in our Constitution, it's going to be difficult to change. But if the jury system is used as a tool to es-

cape prosecution, it's going to work against our system of justice rather than for it."

BUSINESS ETHICS

"If businessmen insist on cutting corners and breaking laws in their quest for profits, then they will set us on a course that could wreck the entire free-enterprise system.

"The bottom line on any firm's ledger book should certainly show profits. But it also must include ethical conduct and a sense of responsibility to the larger society."

* * * *

"The business community must begin to realize that it is part of a larger community whose members will not be forever tolerant of raiders and rip-offs."