

4 Candidates For Special Prosecutor

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Washington

Attorney General-designate Elliot L. Richardson said yesterday that he has narrowed the search for a special prosecutor in the Watergate scandal to four men.

He revealed at the same time that he had considered, and rejected, two candidates suggested by the White House.

Richardson declined to identify his first choice for the sensitive job, but it appeared to be U.S. District Judge Harold R. Tyler Jr., 51, of New York, who met with Richardson here Sunday. An FBI check of Tyler's qualifications was launched the same day.

OTHERS

Others under consideration, Richardson confirmed are:

- Warren Christopher, 47, a Los Angeles attorney who served as deputy attorney general during the Johnson administration.
- William H. Erickson, 49, of Denver, a member of the Colorado Supreme Court and currently chairman of the American Bar Association.

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tion's criminal law division. • David W. Peck, 70, former presiding justice of the New York State Supreme Court's appellate division and now a Wall street lawyer.

"I hope very much that the man will take it," Richardson told the Senate Judiciary Committee, "but they're all good, all highly qualified."

CRITICISM

Democratic senators, meanwhile, criticized the White House for even suggesting candidates to head an investigation that inevitably will focus on the White

House itself.

Under questioning at the third day of his confirmation hearings, Richardson said the suggestions came from General Alexander M. Haig Jr., the new White House chief of staff, and new White House counsel LeRoy Garment.

Prodded by Senator Birch Bayh (Dem-Ind.), Richardson reluctantly named the two Democrats suggested by the White House: former California Governor Edmund G. Brown, who defeated Mr. Nixon for governor of California in 1962, and former Missouri Governor Warren Hearnes.

Richardson said he felt sure "It would come as a surprise" to both of them. He said he dropped them because "I felt they didn't have enough trial or prosecuting experience."

INDISCREET

Regardless of what men the White House suggested, Senator Philip A. Hart (Dem-Mich.) protested that for "White House personnel to make suggestions as to who should investigate the White House shows a singular lack of sensitivity." Bayh called it indiscreet.

Still striving to assure the senators that the special prosecutor will have enough independence to satisfy a suspicious Congress and public, Richardson said he did not seek out the White House advice and gave it no special consideration.

"They were just names dropped in the hopper," he said of Brown and Hearnes. He said neither "lasted as long" as the ten to 12 semifinalists he was still considering Friday.

TYLER

Tyler could not be reached for comment on whether he might take the post. His wife said "he hasn't decided." Under ground rules established by Richardson, he would have to resign from the federal bench and give up any hope of reappointment from the Nixon administration.

Speaking of his own plans to retain "ultimate responsibility" for the Watergate investigation as attorney general, Richardson said he would in no way seek to preclude "investigation of any potential relationship of the President to the facts that

are now being developed."

The attorney general-designate said he agreed with Senator John V. Tun-

ney (Dem-Calif.) who called it crucial for the special prosecutor to have authority "to investigate . . . the President's involvement or lack of involvement" in the illicit activities that have come to light.

REPORT

Richardson added that he is considering commissioning a final report on Watergate and associated scandals. It would be and the written charter that he plans to give him.

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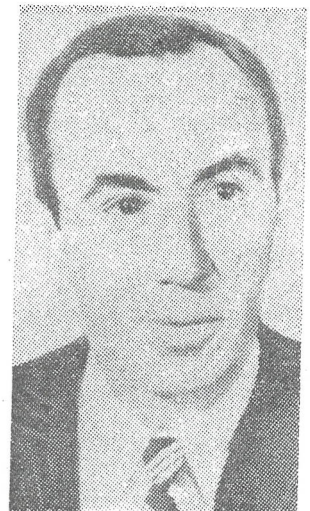
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