

Soap Opera Fans Wailing

By Jim Brewer

San Francisco's three network affiliate television stations were flooded with irate phone calls yesterday from avid soap opera fans who found the Senate Watergate hearings less exciting.

In fact, the first day of gavel-to-gavel coverage drew less than rave reviews all over the country. Daytime TV viewers, it seems, prefer their regular programs.

"They just don't want to be bothered with it," said KRON-TV telephone operator, Mary Bodben. She reported "at least 80 per cent" of "several hundred" who called in demanded the return of their favorite soap opera. The others said they appreciated the switch to Watergate, she added.

"I mean in 'Days of Our Lives' Julie was fooling around with her mother's husband," she said. "That's what they wanted to see. They felt they could see Watergate on the news."

At KGO-TV, operators said complaining phone calls were running more like 10 to 1 against the Watergate cov-

Watergate TV Coverage

The Senate Watergate hearing will be televised over these channels here at these times today:

Channel 4 (KRON-TV) and Channel 5 (KPIX), entire live coverage beginning at 7 a.m.; Channel 7 (KGO-TV), 11 a.m. to 1:30 p.m.; Channel 9 (KQED), 8 p.m. videotape.

Radio stations KCBS (AM), KQED (FM) and KPFA (FM) will carry the hearing started at 7 a.m.

erage. A spokesman there said only about three of 400 callers "thanked us for the coverage." The rest, she said, were more interested in "General Hospital."

Things were a little different at KPIX-TV, the CBS affiliate, where calls were reported running about 3 to

2 against the hearing coverage. One Hayward woman, however, called in to say she polled 90 people in her apartment building and "all of them would have rather seen 'Love of Life.'"

Normally, an estimated 350,000 viewers watch daytime television provided by the three major network channels in the Bay Area.

Similar complaints flooded TV stations across the nation.

An opposite trend took place last night when KQED-TV, in San Francisco played a tape of the hearing telecast.

The phone at the educational network station rang "almost continuously," a KQED spokesman said. Every caller complimented the station for its service and half of the caller pledged money to support KQED, he reported.

The A. C. Nielsen rating service reported that 540,000 homes were watching the morning session of the hearing in the New York area, 271,000 fewer than normally watch TV at that time of day. No nationwide figures were available.