

Nixon Effort To Reverse A Precedent

Washington

White House lawyers are apparently looking for a way to reverse a precedent set by President Nixon in 1970 when he opened administration files to an impeachment inquiry aimed at a Supreme Court justice.

Kenneth Clawson, White House deputy director of communications, told reporters yesterday that a letter written by the President, during an unsuccessful attempt to impeach Supreme Court Justice William O. Douglas, is now under study by White House lawyers to determine if it requires them to cooperate as fully with the impeachment inquiry now aimed at the President.

In that letter, which preceded the release of hundreds of documents including tax returns and Justice department files, the President said the Executive was "clearly obligated" to supply information.

Clawson would not elaborate on what the term "under study" meant and said he was merely repeating information made available at a Thursday press briefing by the White House.

Sources familiar with the discussion state that it involves alternate ways in which the White House could argue that the letter does not necessarily apply to the present case because distinctions could be made between the impeachment of a federal judge and the impeachment of the President.

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