

Phone Record Summons Criticized by IRS Chief

Internal Revenue Service agents never should have summoned eight month's worth of telephone toll-call records of The New York Times' Washington bureau, IRS Commissioner Donald C. Alexander said yesterday.

Alexander, complaining that it is difficult to control the actions of 75,000 IRS employees, said he has taken some steps to curb indiscriminate telephone-record seizures and is considering others.

He told a luncheon meeting of the Harvard Law School Association that new rules will require that the IRS chief of inspection approve administrative summonses that until recently have been authorized by

numerous field officers across the country.

Inquiries by the Reporters Committee for Freedom of the Press have resulted in disclosures by the IRS, the Chesapeake & Potomac Telephone Co and American Telephone & Telegraph Co. that records of 2,500 calls from the Times' bureau here were turned over to the IRS last month.

Alexander said that once he learned of the summons, he immediately determined that the newspapers records should be returned to C&P. He added, however, that he is still considering whether to return records of calls from the home of a Times reporter.