

Contempt Trial For Liddy Set

Washington

Watergate conspirator G. Gordon Liddy, already twice sentenced for the bugging scandal and under indictment for his role in the White House "plumbers unit" was ordered yesterday to stand trial for contempt of Congress.

U.S. District Judge John H. Pratt denied Liddy's motion to dismiss the contempt indictment at a brief hearing and set trial for May 10.

At Liddy's request, it will be held without a jury.

Liddy, the so-called "si-

lent man of Watergate," did not speak at the hearing. But he scribbled notes to his lawyer and at the end held up for reporters a "no comment" sign scrawled on the back of a large envelope.

His steadfast refusal to discuss any aspect of Watergate or related cases with authorities has already won Liddy a sentence for contempt of court. Liddy is a former FBI agent, White House aide and lawyer for President Nixon's 1972 re-election campaign.

Last month, a Watergate grand jury indicted him on two counts of contempt of Congress for his refusal even to take the oath last July 20 before a House armed services subcommittee on intelligence.

The committee had summoned Liddy to testify at a closed session. It was investigating alleged CIA involvement in the Watergate bugging, its coverup and the 1971 "plumbers" break-in at the Los Angeles office of Dr. Lewis J. Fielding, Daniel Ellsberg's former psychiatrist.

Liddy's lawyer, Peter W. Maroulis, argued before Pratt that the indictment was unconstitutional. He contended that if Liddy had testified before the committee there would have been massive publicity that would have "come back to haunt him and foreclosed chances for a fair trial if he were indicted in the future.

But Philip Lacovara, an aide to special prosecutor Leon Jaworski, pointed out that Liddy was not indicted on federal charges in connection with the Fielding raid until last month — nine months after his refusal to testify on the Hill — and said Liddy had no absolute right to refuse to testify.

United Press