

Proxmire Blasts Economic Aide

A New White House Snub

Washington

President Nixon's new chief economic adviser claimed executive privilege when asked by a congressional committee to discuss the nation's economy, Senator William Proxmire (Dem-Wis.), said yesterday.

Proxmire, co-chairman of the Joint Economic Committee, canceled three days of hearings scheduled to begin Monday and said he will try to persuade members of the Appropriations Committee to deny funds "to pay Mr. (Kenneth) Rush's salary until he agrees to appear before appropriate congressional committees."

Rush had been scheduled to appear before the committee Tuesday but told Proxmire in a letter that his responsibility to give President Nixon "candid and uninhibited advice" would prevent him from testifying.

Proxmire called Rush's excuse "a spurious notion of executive privilege."

He said Rush's refusal to testify is "based on the same arrogance of power and immaturity of thought that led to Watergate."

"For the self-described new primary adviser on economic policy, to the President to refuse to account to Congress on some

spurious notion of separation of powers is both unacceptable and ridiculous," Proxmire said in a statement.

He noted that a 1946 law gives the Joint Economic Committee responsibility to review a President's economic policy.

"No one will ask Mr. Rush to tell us what he said personally to the President," Proxmire said.

"What we are interested in are not Mr. Rush's conversations with the President but his views as the new economic czar on the immensely important and

topical issues over which he will exercise great power and authority such as inflation, unemployment and economic growth," he said.

Proxmire said hearings were called to review Mr. Nixon's recently released mid-year economic report.

"Almost the only new or major policy in that document was the appointment of Mr. Rush as the man in charge of the administration's economic policy," he said.

"One would think that the events of the last two years, in which a large number

of heretofore inexperienced people asserted a unique theory of unaccountability of power and authority, might not have been lost on Mr. Rush and his White House colleagues.

"Mr. Rush has thwarted that wholly healthy democratic process," Proxmire continued.

"While the hearings cannot now go forward, there are a variety of other actions I intend to take in addition to cutting out his salary to force Mr. Rush's accountability."

A.P. & U.P.