

Probers Want To Hear Colson

Washington

Members of the House Judiciary Committee said yesterday that Charles W. Colson's courtroom statement implicating President Nixon in possible obstruction of justice made it imperative that Colson be called as a witness at impeachment hearings.

Colson, a former White House special counsel, told U.S. District Judge Gerhard A. Gesell that the President had repeatedly urged him to disseminate information that might discredit Daniel Ellsberg while Ellsberg was a defendant in the Pentagon Papers conspiracy trial.

Committee members said that if Colson's statement is correct, Mr. Nixon might be legally accountable as a party to obstruction of justice, the charge to which Colson pleaded guilty.

Albert E. Jenner Jr., the

panel's chief Republican counsel on impeachment, said pointedly that staff interviews with Colson, which began a week ago, are not completed. The comment suggested that Colson would be asked to give a more complete accounting of Mr. Nixon's role in the attempt to discredit Ellsberg.

Colson's courtroom remarks surprised committee members and, in the case of some Republicans, caused chagrin.

Informed by reporters of the statement, committee chairman Peter W. Rodino Jr. (Dem-N.J.) went immediately to the panel's senior Republican, Edward Hutchinson of Michigan, to relay the information.

Rodino told newsmen that "serious questions" about the President's conduct were raised by Colson's statement.

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