

Colson Warning on Watergate Peril

Washington

The greatest peril of Watergate, says prison-bound Charles Wendell Colson, is that. "We'll purge a few people and then we'll say 'Now all the rest of us are saved.'

"Well . . . all the rest of the country isn't saved by just exiling a few Nixon men," he declared.

Once one of the closest of the Nixon men, Colson reflected upon Watergate and other issues in an interview just a week before he is to surrender himself for at least a year's imprisonment for obstructing justice.

"The tragedy of this," he said of the scandal, "is not just in the broken lives and careers and broken homes. But the real tragedy is that it takes our attention away from what are some of the fundamental problems.

"We've got to have several things happen out of Watergate if the country is to be better for it. One has to

be getting rid of the anger and hatred and divisiveness that Watergate has created.

"The second thing is we need some serious structural reforms in the political process and in the governmental process . . . Foremost in that area," he said, is "the need for public financing of political campaigns."

Along with public financing of campaigns, said Colson, another prime objective should be greater congressional and executive control of the Central Intelligence Agency.

Colson said the CIA was "much more deeply involved in a lot of things than the public thus far knows. I'm gonna be doing a lot of testifying about this, I suspect, and I'd rather save it for that."

Meanwhile, he said, a report on the subject being readied by Senator Howard H. Baker Jr. (Rep-Tenn.), "is going to raise an awful lot of questions."

Associated Press