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Some Questions on Nixon Checkup

Washington

A three-man medical team is seeking legal clarification of its role in determining former President Nixon's physical fitness to testify at the Watergate coverup trial, panel chairman Charles A. Hufnagel said yesterday.

Hufnagel told reporters the special group appointed by U.S. District Judge John J. Sirica cannot proceed before the court determines whether the former president will agree to an independent medical evaluation.

"It is not the job of the panel to engage in a legal problem," he said. The three doctors must know

first "whether it is possible, if it is indeed advisable" to examine Mr. Nixon, he said.

Hufnagel said he wants the court, rather than the doctors, to contact Mr. Nixon's lawyers.

"Otherwise, what are we supposed to do?" Hufnagel asked. "Go out to Long Beach, rent a hotel room and start making phone calls asking whom do we contact?"

Hufnagel said that he expects clarification on this question from Sirica in the next day or two, and that he has not been in contact with Mr. Nixon's personal physicians.

Biggest Elk

Ottawa

Vancouver Island's most significant animal is the Roosevelt elk, the largest terrestrial species.

United Press

Hufnagel, director of an experimental research laboratory at Georgetown University Medical School here, said he accepted the appointment Sunday without reservation, but told Sirica that the judge's November 29 deadline for a report might pose a problem.

The other members of the panel are Drs. Richard Starr

Ross, physician in charge of the adult cardiac clinic at Johns Hopkins Hospital in Baltimore, and John A. Spittell Jr., a consultant at the Mayo clinic's division of cardiovascular disease in Rochester, Minn.

Hufnagel said it is his belief that Mr. Nixon would have to give his permission before the examination could proceed and that if he didn't, "his would then be a matter for the courts to decide."

Mr. Nixon's personal physician, Dr. John Lummgren, said yesterday he regards Sirica's order as all that's necessary. And Sirica, in his instructions to the doctors



AP Wirephoto
CHARLES A. HUFNAGEL
Seeking clarification

Wednesday, said they should attempt to make the examination and then, if they fail, complain to him.

There was no explanation for Hufnagel's apparent confusion.

United Press