

Nixon Pay Delay Ruled Illegal

Washington

A U.S. court of appeals ruled late yesterday that President Nixon illegally delayed by three months a 1972 pay raise for the government's civilian employees and they are entitled to the income they missed.

The ruling, although involving a single 60,000-member federal union, would be applicable to all the government's 2.1 million civilian employees and involves an estimated \$500 million.

Ruling in a suit brought by the National Treasury Employees Union, the three-judge panel said Mr. Nixon failed to abide by the law in delaying from October 1972 to January 1973 a pay adjustment legislated by Congress.

In a lengthy opinion the court held that Mr. Nixon properly could be sued by name and properly could be ordered by the court to see that the government pays its employees the money they lost.

But the court said to spare the President the embarrassment of becoming the subject of such an order, it would merely enter a declaratory judgment that the employees are entitled to the money.

The court said it wanted to give the President a "reasonable time" to comply on his own and was giving him "every opportunity to implement the law as it is declared herein or timely to seek review of this decision."

Associated Press