

Senate Panel Is Probing Probers

Washington

The Senate's select committee on the Watergate is actively investigating the conduct and handling of the Watergate prosecution by the Department of Justice, according to government sources and others.

The prosecutors who supervised the Watergate investigation received evidence last year — before the Watergate trial — indicating that there was a cover-up of high-level involvement in the bugging of Democratic headquarters, the source said.

Although some of this evidence was received fully six months before the Watergate trial, the prosecutors failed to adequately pursue the leads it provided, the sources reported. Instead, the three-man prosecution

continued to insist through the trial that there was not a single piece of evidence to indicate that the Watergate conspiracy extended beyond the seven men convicted in January.

In addition, the Senate's Watergate committee has been told that the FBI and prosecutors did not conduct intensive questioning of many potentially crucial witnesses and failed altogether to interview some key persons from the White House and President Nixon's re-election committee.

As a prime example of the inadequacy of the initial Watergate investigation, Senate sources cited the failure of either the prosecution or the FBI to question former White House chief of staff H. R. Haldeman, who has since been implicated in the renewed investigation.

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