

Watergate Attorneys Probe Eyed

By Eugene L. Meyer
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The National Association of Lawyers who recommend disciplinary measures against other lawyers, is considering setting up a special committee to deal with attorneys implicated in the Watergate scandal, the group's president said yesterday.

"My personal feelings are that we should see to it that investigations are undertaken concerning any questions of misconduct," said Frederick C. Stimmel, president of the National Organization of Bar Counsels and also counsel to the New York State Bar Association.

Therefore, Stimmel said in a telephone interview, "I'm placing the matter on the agenda" of the organization's national convention here early next month.

While the special action committee cannot force various state bars to take action against lawyers, Stimmel said it could insure that "every state bar association is aware of any particular situation they should investigate." Specific duties of the committee are to be discussed and decided at the convention, he said.

Here in the District of Columbia, newly-appointed bar counsel Fred Grabowski said that he is investigating allegations of misconduct against 50 lawyers whose names have been cited in

connection with Watergate.

His investigation, Grabowski said, could result in disbarment, suspension, public censure or a private reprimand from the seven-member D.C. Bar disciplinary board. The bar counsel is responsible for probing unethical practices by lawyers but it is the disciplinary board that ultimately takes action against them in the District.

"I have a list of every lawyer whose name has been mentioned in the Watergate," Grabowski said. "There will be no action taken while criminal procedures or (other) actions are in effect," although the investigation will proceed, he said.

Grabowski said that he and several of his counterparts in other states have been informally discussing one action their national organization should take.

"We have to have a national clearing house. Watergate has put the focus on it," he said. "We're going to try to devise some plan so we don't let anybody slip through our fingers."

Grabowski estimated that lawyers implicated in Watergate are licensed to practice in five or six different states. "When a lawyer is disbarred in one place, there should be a way to spread the information around," he said.

Former presidential counsel John Dean III is said to have told President Nixon that about 10 lawyers, including members of his administration, could be indicted in the Watergate and its coverup. Chesterfield Smith, president-elect of the American Bar Association, said on the NBC's Today Show July 18 that "if you are involved in obstruction of justice in any way, it's a heinous thing and will subject you to disciplinary sanction at some time, including disbarment."