

Saxbe's Jab at Watergate Probe

Washington

Attorney general-designate William B. Saxbe said yesterday that the Senate Watergate committee's subpoena of more than 400 White House tapes and documents is a "fishing expedition" created to keep the committee in business.

Saxbe also said in an interview that he will pursue "strict, vigorous enforcement" of the antitrust laws and will conduct an investigation of the oil companies to see if they did anything to contrive the fuel shortage.

The Ohio Republican senator, to be sworn in today as President Nixon's fourth attorney general said he believes the President has "cooperated" with special Watergate prosecutor Leon Jaworski's investigation and renewed his pledge to honor Jaworski's full independence.

"He has his operation and I have mine," Saxbe said. "I

don't know of any place I'd get involved unless he wants me to."

Saxbe said the committee's subpoena of more than 400 of Mr. Nixon's tapes and other papers "is obviously a fishing expedition. It had to come to this sooner or later.

"To keep in business the committee has to have grist for its mill," he said. "If they can keep dredging stuff up, they'll go on forever."

Saxbe said the committee's action will "come to a point where the President has to decide whether there is any privacy in his office."

Saxbe said he didn't have enough information to support any suspicion that the major oil firms may have acted to hold down fuel supplies but that "the average person thinks there is reason" for such conjecture.

"And as an average person I share their view," he said.

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