

The Financing of Nixon's Defense If He's Tried

Washington

Attorney General William B. Saxbe said yesterday it would be wrong for the taxpayers to finance President Nixon's defense lawyers in a Senate trial of any impeachment charges.

Saxbe said he believes "a defense fund" should be established if the accusations against Mr. Nixon proceed to that point.

The attorney general made his comments at his first news conference since becoming head of the Justice Department a week ago.

He said that government lawyers, including those in the Justice Department, could rightly be involved in defending the President at some point prior to a Senate trial if the House votes to impeach simply on the basis that congressmen "don't like him."

Saxbe said that politically motivated impeachment proceedings attacking Mr. Nixon's performance of duties within his clear authority as President would allow the President to rely on government-paid lawyers.



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Attorney General Saxbe said if there's a Senate trial, taxpayers shouldn't pay for the President's lawyers

"If, on the other hand, it's based on an indictment or solid charges of criminality, then you have reached the point that it is beyond the scope" of Mr. Nixon's duties as president, Saxbe said; and government lawyers should take no part in the defense.

"If it reaches the Senate for any reason, the Justice Department is out of it at that point," the attorney general added. "His defense obviously would be in the hands of his personal attorneys."

The attorney general was asked whether he will allow three Justice Department lawyers on loan to the White House to continue working on Mr. Nixon's defense against Watergate charges. Saxbe indicated that he would permit them to remain for the time being, but said the three lawyers probably would be recalled at some point during any impeachment proceedings.

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