

## Two Views Of Antitrust And Big Oil

Washington

Senator William Proxmire (Dem-Wis.), charging there may be "an illegal conspiracy," yesterday urged Attorney General William B. Saxbe to take antitrust action against the major oil companies.

Saxbe, on the other hand, said what actually might be needed is relaxation of the antitrust laws so the big oil producers can cooperate in helping solve the nation's energy crisis.

Proxmire released the text of a letter in which he told Saxbe:

"There may be ample evidence of joint efforts by the major oil companies to share markets, restrict outputs, raise prices, deny crude to independent refiners, and deny products to independent marketers — evidence to constitute an illegal conspiracy in violation of the Sherman (antitrust) Act.

"As the courts have held, there need not be a showing of an overt act to sustain such a criminal suit; circumstantial evidence may suffice. All that is required is that proof of such conscious, concerted efforts existed beyond a reasonable doubt."

Saxbe did not immediately respond directly to Proxmire's proposal. But he said in a television interview yesterday it would be "reasonable" to change the laws or make other arrangements allowing oil companies to get together on improving the situation.

"We've got some conflicts going on that . . . if they weren't so serious, would be amusing, because Mr. Si-

mon says to the oil companies now you get together and do this, and they say, 'Get together? If we even tip our hats to each other why we're in big trouble with the attorney general . . .,'" Saxbe said.

"So if we want them to get together, we're going to have to get together under a man from Mr. Simon's office or we're going to have to pass a law to give them some freedom to work to-

gether."

Saxbe appeared on CBS-TV's "Face the Nation."

Turning to Watergate, Saxbe said arguments over whether President Nixon should be impeached will continue throughout the remaining three years of his term.

"It's an effort to blame somebody and it's going to continue," Saxbe said.

A.P. & U.P.