

Sirica Delays on Nixon Health Issue

Washington

U.S. District Judge John Sirica, while saying he thinks former President Nixon should testify in person at the Watergate coverup trial, postponed a decision yesterday on whether to compel his appearance pending a further report on Mr. Nixon's health.

He ordered Mr. Nixon's lawyers to submit a report on the former president's medical condition within three weeks and said he would decide on the basis of that whether to send a team of doctors to California to examine Mr. Nixon on the court's behalf.

"It would be helpful to the defendants and the govern-

ment if he progresses to the point where it would not injure his health for him to appear here in open court," Sirica said.

Sirica expressed his views at a brief hearing on motions by Mr. Nixon's attorneys to quash subpoenas for him to testify at the trial of five former aides accused of covering up the Watergate scandal.

Nixon lawyer Herbert J. Miller Jr. said the former President is recovering well from his phlebitis condition and the "prognosis is very good" that within three weeks to a month he would no longer claim ill health as a bar to testifying.

United Press