

Possible Clemency Center Wiretap

Indianapolis

The Indiana Bell Telephone Co. is investigating possible illegal wiretaps on three telephone lines of the National Clemency Information Center here.

The center, sponsored jointly by a unit of the National Council of Churches and the American Civil Liberties Union, counsels military deserters and their families about clemency processing operated by the Department of Defense at

Ft. Benjamin Harrison near Indianapolis.

Ronald Elberger, president of the Indiana Civil Liberties Union, sought the investigation, he said, after center workers noted frequent clicking and repeated disconnects on the lines during the last six to eight weeks.

Elberger, in a letter to Indiana Bell, said that the center had information that one of the utility's own employees suspected a wiretap. A spokesman for Indiana Bell

said its records showed no court authorization for a wiretap on the center's telephones, but that the company's investigation had not been finished.

The Clemency Information Center has sought an extension of the January 31 deadline on applications for clemency in a federal court suit brought December 19 by it and five Vietnam war deserters now in Canada and the War Resistor Information Program of Winnipeg, Canada.

A hearing is scheduled for Wednesday before Judge Aubrey Robinson Jr. of the U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia.

The suit contends that the amnesty program as administered by Secretary of Defense James R. Schlesinger and seven other defendants is unconstitutional because it allegedly violated guarantees of the due process and equal protection under the Fifth Amendment.

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