

# President Defends Kleindienst as 'Able, Honest Man'

By RICHARD HALLORAN

Special to The New York Times

WASHINGTON, March 24—President Nixon asserted today that Acting Attorney General Richard G. Kleindienst was "an able, honest man" and predicted that he would be confirmed as Attorney General despite allegations of impropriety against him.

Mr. Nixon, in a news conference in his office, said, "I had confidence when I appointed him that he was qualified for this position. I still have that confidence. I believe that he should be confirmed and I believe that he will be confirmed."

## Dispute Over Typewriter

In his first personal defense of Mr. Kleindienst, the President said that nothing in the hearings before the Senate Judiciary Committee had "shaken my confidence in Mr. Kleindienst as an able, honest man fully qualified to be Attorney General of the United States."

The Senate committee, headed by Senator James O. Eastland, Democrat of Mississippi, has been investigating alleged connections between an out-of-court settlement on anti-

trust actions against the International Telephone and Telegraph Corporation and a company contribution to the Republican National Convention in San Diego.

The alleged connection was brought to public attention by Jack Anderson, the syndicated columnist, who published a memorandum purportedly written by an International Telephone lobbyist, Mrs. Dita D. Beard.

The Federal Bureau of Investigation suggested today that the memorandum, the authenticity of which has been questioned, had been written on Mrs. Beard's typewriter. The bureau also said that it had not been written on the typewriter of Brit Hume, one of Mr. Anderson's reporters, as was alleged in a committee hearing.

On Capitol Hill, Senator Adlai E. Stevenson 3d, Democrat of Illinois, urged the President to withdraw the nomination of Mr. Kleindienst, who is said to have a hand in arranging a settlement of the anti-trust suits.

Mr. Stevenson, in remarks he had prepared for delivery on the Senate floor, said, "The President can spare further em-

barrassment — not just to his Administration, but to all of our institutions of self-government — by withdrawing the nomination of Mr. Kleindienst."

Americans for Democratic Action also asked the Senate to reject Mr. Kleindienst's nomination. In a letter to the Judiciary Committee, the group's chairman, Allard K. Lowenstein, said:

"As the stain of the I.T.T. continues to grow, one fact remains proven: that Richard G. Kleindienst had previously denied he had been involved in the case when in fact he was."

But Senator Edward J. Gurney, Republican of Florida, defended Mr. Kleindienst and contended that there was not "a shred of evidence that there was any impropriety by the Justice Department in the settlement of the antitrust cases against I.T.T."

## An Abrupt Response

Mr. Gurney, a member of the Judiciary Committee, charged, "The Democrats are stalling and prolonging the hearings by asking the same questions over and over again. A great deal of politics is going on in these hearings."

In his news conference, Mr. Nixon also defended a White House aide, Peter M. Flanigan, who is also alleged to have helped to bring about the anti-trust settlement. Mr. Nixon said that "a Presidential aide must listen to all who come to the White House" to hear all sides of a case or a cause.

But, Mr. Nixon said, "What is improper is for a Presidential aide to use influence for personal gain, and to use influence in any way that would not be in the public interest." He noted that his press secretary, Ronald L. Ziegler, had expressed Presidential confidence in Mr. Flanigan and added, "I have nothing further to say."

Later in the news conference, Mr. Nixon was asked whether Mr. Flanigan would testify before the Senate committee, as Senator Thomas F. Eagleton, Democrat of Missouri, had demanded. Mr. Nixon somewhat abruptly referred to Mr. Ziegler's earlier indication that he would not and added, "I will not respond further."

The President was asked what he thought of large political contributions by corporations "in terms of possibly getting something back for it?" International Telephone had proposed to contribute up to \$200,000, or in some accounts \$400,000, to help finance the Republican convention next summer.

## Rules Out 'Understandings'

Mr. Nixon replied, "Nobody gets anything back as far as the general contributions are concerned in this Administration." He said that contributions "must be accepted with no understandings, expressed or implied, that anything is to be done, or as a result of those contributions, that would not be done in the ordinary course of events."