

DEC 7 1972

NYTimes

BURGER RENEWS PLEA FOR AGENCY

Urges Bar Leaders to Press
for U.S. Justice Institute

Special to The New York Times

WASHINGTON, Dec. 6 —

Leaders of the bar and concerned laymen met here tonight at the behest of the American Bar Association to consider whether and how a new national organization could help meet what the association's president called "our total justice crisis."

Chief Justice Warren E. Burger urged the opening meeting of a three-day conference to press ahead with plans for a national institute of justice, despite some criticism that the new agency's principal contribution would be another layer of legal bureaucracy.

The Chief Justice has been the most influential sponsor of the national institute idea. In a speech to the American Law Institute last May, he urged that the new agency be authorized by Congress, be governed by laymen as well as lawyers, make grants for court improvement projects and conduct its own research on the judicial system.

In a keynote address, Robert W. Meserve, president of the bar association, said that lawyers "must finally confront the reality that existing institutions and organizations, be they public or private, representing specific constituencies, cannot hope to resolve our national problem through piecemeal approaches which those separate constituencies can and will support."

The association's sponsorship of a conference on the proposed institute of justice, Mr. Meserve said, is not an attempt "to wrest away from government agencies and private organizations the control of the dispensation of justice and the dollars associated with this role."

"We seek to create no empire of our own," the A.B.A. President said, "nor are we concerned with the creation or preservation of political power."

Some Government officials, notably in the Department of Justice, have expressed suspicion that the institute would increase the public influence of private members of the bar.

Mr. Meserve said the institute was needed because there was no government agency charged with responsibility for legal research and no single place where both public and private funds could be exclusively devoted to "improving the legal process as a whole." After workshop discussions of aspects of the institute of justice proposal tomorrow, the conference will end with a plenary session on Friday.