

Science Advisers Angered Nixon

New York

Two former aides in the Nixon White House acknowledged yesterday that the former President abolished the job of White House science adviser because he didn't like the scientific advice he was getting that opposed pet projects of the administration.

When the science adviser's job and the White House Office of Science and Technology was abolished two years ago, Nixon aides denied that it was done in a fit of pique over advice—sometimes leaked publicly from White House scientists who opposed the Vietnam war, the supersonic transport plane and the setting up of an anti-ballistic missile system.

Instead, Nixon aides said at the time, the former President merely was trying to reduce what they called an overly large and clumsy executive staff.

But the last science adviser to Mr. Nixon—Edward E. David Jr.—told the American Association for the Advancement of Science annual meeting here yesterday that the former President made his decision because he was annoyed that his scientific advisers had refused to follow his administration's line.

"There was definitely a falling out between the scientific community and the President. One thing you can do if you want to reform an institution is get rid of it," David said.

"The White House advisers to Nixon thought that the scientists were using science as a sledgehammer to grind their political axes," he continued.

His view was echoed by Clay Whitehead, former

director of the Office of Telecommunications Policy in the Nixon White House and now a fellow at Harvard University.

Whitehead, who was involved in setting administration policy, said top aides to Mr. Nixon were angry because they felt the White House science advisers showed greater allegiance to their scientific colleagues than to the policies of the administration they worked for.

William Carey, a former assistant director of the Bureau of the Budget, said presidential disenchantment with science advisers went back to former President Johnson, "who ignored the scientific community."

The custom of having a White House science adviser started with President Eisenhower as part of a national reaction to the United States' scientific strength that followed the Soviet launching of Sputnik, the first satellite to be shot into space, in 1957.

Under pressure from scientific groups around the country, President Ford has promised to consider appointing a science adviser and has asked Vice President Nelson Rockefeller to study the question. David predicted that Mr. Ford would reinstate the office of a presidential science adviser.

Washington Post