

SF Chronicle

MAY 11 1971

McClellan Orders Wiretap Probe

The Senate's best known criminal investigator said yesterday he has ordered an inquiry into Federal and State wiretapping to calm "public uneasiness" about it.

Senator John L. McClellan (Dem.-Ark.) said he had directed the staff of his subcommittee on criminal laws and procedures "to undertake a comprehensive examination" of how government

officials carry out wiretaps and of what legal controls limit them.

The Justice Department issued a brief statement saying "The Justice Department issued a brief statement saying that Attorney General John N. Mitchell had promised to give the subcommittee "every possible assistance."

McClellan, chairman of the Senate Permanent Investiga-

tions Subcommittee, stressed that he is satisfied that the government had not trampled any citizen's civil rights in using broadened surveillance powers provided by the 1968 Crime Control Act.

The Senator sponsored the section of that law which authorizes wiretaps with prior court approval.

He said he sees "no evidence" to warrant fear but

that "I am frank to admit that I sense a public uneasiness about wiretapping." For that reason, he said, "there is a need for a public review of the facts — all of the facts."

McClellan, who has led investigations into subjects ranging from interstate gambling to operation of U.S. Servicemen's clubs, said he hopes to begin public hear-

ings on wiretapping in the fall.

McClellan's remarks followed weeks of public controversy over the government's wiretapping activities. Most of the attacks — some of them coming from Congress — have been directed at the FBI and its director, J. Edgar Hoover, who started his 48th year yesterday as chief of the Federal police agency.

United Press