

SFChronicle

APR 12 1973

A Blast by Republican Leader

Kleindienst's Executive Privilege

Washington

The chairman of the House Republican Conference yesterday angrily denounced Attorney General Richard Kleindienst's sweeping claims of executive privilege and urged their immediate repudiation by Congress.

"The attorney general has literally thrown down the gauntlet," Representative John B. Anderson (Rep.-Ill.)

told three Senate subcommittees conducting joint hearings on the controversy. He charged that Kleindienst's testimony in the same forum Tuesday "borders on contempt for the established law of the land."

An unscheduled witness at the hearings, Anderson said he had not been inclined before this to take an overly restrictive view of executive privilege but felt "compelled" to speak up in the

face of Kleindienst's assertions.

CLAIM

Elaborating on the privilege doctrine that President Nixon enunciated last month to cover his personal White House staff, Kleindienst maintained that the President has the right to prevent any federal employee from testifying before Congress, even in impeachment proceedings.

Touching on the Water-

gate case, the attorney general said that alleged criminal violations were "uniquely the province of the judiciary" and that presidential immunity from congressional testimony could even be invoked for subordinates accused of wrongdoing.

Despite that assertion, Senator Edward J. Gurney (Rep.-Fla.), who is also a member of the Senate's Watergate investigating committee, said at yester-

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day's session, "I think we're going to get all the witnesses we want to get" at the upcoming Watergate hearings.

SHOCK

Anderson voiced "utter shock and dismay" at Kleindienst's testimony, and said it left him wondering whether "the chief lawyer of the government has ever heard of the Freedom of Information Act."

Asked at a briefing if

the White House concurred in the attorney general's definition of executive power, presidential press secretary Ronald L. Ziegler said: "He was expressing administration policy, yes."

Ziegler said the administration regularly provides Congress with "massive amounts of materials," and he said Kleindienst "pointed out that we have a policy of being very forthcoming."

Washington Post Service