

White House 'Leak Stopper' Leaves

WASHINGTON — (AP) — Egil "Bud" Krogh, boss of the White House "plumbers" at the time of the alleged Ellsberg burglary, took a sudden leave today from his job as No. 2 man at the Department of Transportation.

His boss, Transportation Secretary Claude Brinegar, urged him to speak publicly about the burglary, a department spokesman said.

But Krogh, who didn't show up for work this morning, asked for a few days of personal leave, and Brinegar granted his request, the spokesman said.

Hired Plotters

Krogh has testified under oath that he hired G. Gordon Liddy and E. Howard Hunt, the two Watergate conspirators accused of breaking into the office of a psychiatrist who treated Daniel Ellsberg, the man on trial for stealing the Pentagon Papers.

The "plumbers" were set up on President Nixon's orders in July, 1971, after the Pentagon Papers were published in several newspapers. Their publicly announced mission was to stop any more such news "leaks."

Now it appears their activities also included investigations of Ellsberg, who by that time had admitted stealing the secret documents and giving them to newspapers.

Disturbed

Brinegar was reported as

disturbed that Krogh's connection with the Watergate scandal — while still tenuous — might interfere with the functioning of his department. He has been in office only three months, about the same time as Krogh.

A friend described Krogh today as "obviously shaken" by an interview the FBI obtained from his former boss at the White House, John D. Ehrlichman, who resigned Monday as a presidential adviser because of the Watergate scandal.

In it, Ehrlichman told the FBI that Hunt and Liddy, while working at the White House, sought psychiatric information about Ellsberg. The FBI quoted Ehrlichman as saying he found out about the alleged burglary after it happened and he told them "not to do this again."

Vague Account

Ehrlichman's account is vague about the roles played either by Krogh, an all-purpose aide whom he had placed in general charge of the "plumbers," or David Young, a National Security Council staff member who also worked with the four-man group.

Young resigned from the White House a few weeks ago, with no announcement or explanation. Earlier this

year Krogh was questioned about the "plumbers" operation by the Senate Commerce Committee, which was holding hearings on Krogh's nomination to be undersecretary of transportation. Krogh said he exercised general supervision of the "plumbers," laying out their work for them and coordination with other branches of government.

Seen Frequently

He said Liddy and Young worked together in a basement room at the Executive Office Building, adjacent to the White House, and that Hunt had another office but saw the other two men frequently.

Krogh testified that his supervision of the group continued until October, 1971, about a month after the alleged Ellsberg burglary.