

Dean 'Hopes President Is Forgiven'

Washington

Here is the statement with which ousted White House counsel John W. Dean III prefaced his Watergate testimony yesterday.

"Before I commence reading the rather lengthy statement I would just like to make a couple comments. First of all Mr. Chairman, Mr. Vice Chairman, members of the committee, I sincerely wish I could say that it's my pleasure to be here today.

"You can understand why it's not. It's a very difficult thing for me to testify about other people. It's far more easy for me to explain my own involvement in this matter, the fact that I was involved in obstruction of justice, I assisted another in perjured testimony, the fact that I made personal use of funds that were in my custody. It's far easier to talk about these things myself than to talk about what others did.

"Some of these people I'll be referring to are friends and are men I greatly admire and respect.

"And particularly with reference to the President of the United States I'd like to say this:

"It's my honest belief that while the President was involved that he did not realize or appreciate at any time that implications of his involvement, and I think that when the facts come out, I hope the President is forgiven."

Associated Press