

Sen. Gurney Wants to See Nixon Papers

Washington

Senator Edward J. Gurney, who has been the staunchest defender of President Nixon on the Senate Watergate committee, said yesterday he believes that presidential papers bearing on the Watergate investigation should be made available to the committee.

Saturday, Mr. Nixon declared that he would not appear personally before the committee in any circumstance and would not permit the committee to inspect his files.

Gurney, a Florida Republican, was interviewed on the American Broadcasting Company's television program, "Issues And Answers." He said that he agrees with Mr. Nixon that "there are confidential communications, certainly, that ought to be protected, between a President and his advisers and staff people."

But he went on to say:

"I think we probably ought to be able to get any documents that have a direct bearing on this Watergate affair and who is involved and what happened, and I think we ought to have that for our committee deliberations."

MEMBER

On the same program, Senator Herman E. Talmadge, another committee member, agreed that the papers should be provided and asserted, "I have always thought that public records belong to the American public, and that a committee of the United States senate would have a right to see those records and to subpoena them if necessary."

Gurney and Talmadge, a Georgia Democrat, also agreed that the committee did not have the authority to subpoena the President to appear before the committee.

But Talmadge urged a vol-

untary appearance by the President to dispel "this cloud that's hanging over the White House."

"If he has nothing to hide, why does he refuse to ap-

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pear?" Talmadge asked.

Gurney suggested that the President could answer charges made against him by John W. Dean III, his former counsel, by holding a "free-swinging press conference."

Mr. Nixon, in his letter Saturday to the committee's chairman, Senator Sam J. Ervin Jr. promised that he would publicly answer Dean's allegations "at an appropriate time."

Ervin was sharply critical of the President's letter, saying that Mr. Nixon would have to "take the consequences" of his decision "to withhold information from the committee and the American people."

The Watergate committee's ranking Republican, Senator Howard H. Baker Jr. of Tennessee, said that

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he agreed with the president that the separation of powers doctrine would make it impossible for the committee to subpoena the president to testify. But Baker said that he hoped "some other means can be worked out" to get Mr. Nixon's version.

Another committee member, Senator Daniel K. Inouye (Dem-Hawaii) said that testimony from Mr. Nixon was "vital to his future."

"Silence does not necessarily indicate guilt," Inouye said. "Unfortunately, many people do interpret silence in that manner."

In his letter to Ervin, the president said that the "principle of confidentiality of presidential papers" is "indispensable."

In other Watergate developments yesterday:

- Senator Robert C. Byrd (Dem-W. Va.) suggested that Mr. Nixon call a news conference to answer charges made against him during the Watergate hearings. Byrd was interviewed on television. (Face The Nation — CBS).

- Historian James Mac-

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Gurney Denies Charge

Washington

Senator Edward Gurney (Rep-Fla.) denied yesterday John W. Dean's description of him as a potential defender of the White House on the Senate Watergate committee.

"There has been no attempt by anybody in the White House to get in touch with me. And I've been in touch with no one, or any member of my staff."

"I do believe in seeing the truth come out, all the truth, in these hearings even if it involves the President of the United States."

Gurney discussed the Dean testimony on the ABC-TV interview program Issues and Answers.

Asked to comment on the statement by Dean, in testimony before the Watergate panel, that then presidential aide John D. Ehrlichman described Gurney as being counted on to defend the President without being asked, the senator replied: "Nothing could be further from the truth."

As for reports that he had received campaign contributions from associates of President Nixon, Gurney said he has not seen the list of contributors at a fund-raising affair for him in Washington about a month ago, but has been informed presidential confidant G. C. "Bebe" Rebozo gave \$100.

But he said the fund-raising "was perfectly legal and the reports have all been made." *United Press*

Gregor Burns said on NBC-TV's "Meet the Press" that the President was "absolutely within his constitutional rights" to refuse to appear before the committee or make his papers available. Burns said an impeachment proceeding would be a "perfectly good constitutional process to explain his case."

New York Times