

Request Is Denied

Senate select Watergate committee chairman Sen. Sam J. Ervin Jr. (D-N.C.) declined yesterday to follow the request of Sen. James L. Buckley (Cons.-Rep., N.Y.) to put committee staff members under oath to determine if they are "leaking" information to the news media.

"Given the widespread media coverage of all aspects of the Watergate investigation," Buckley wrote Ervin in a letter released by Buckley yesterday, "anonymous leaks from committee staff members can result, and I fear may have already resulted, in a peculiarly vicious form of guilt-by-association against which it is virtually impossible for an innocent man to defend himself."

Ervin replied in a three-page letter that the committee is not authorized to take testimony from its staff, and that to do so would "result in great injury to the morale of the staff," would presume the guilt of staff members until they proved their innocence, and probably would be fruitless in any event.