

Watergate Prosecution Staff Still Functioning, Hill Told

The Watergate prosecution staff that served under Archibald Cox until President Nixon fired him as special prosecutor is intact and functioning, Congress was told yesterday.

"There have been no resignations," Henry S. Ruth, deputy special prosecutor, told a House Judiciary subcommittee, he added, in reply to a question, that nobody has been fired.

Ruth's testimony came as the subcommittee approved a bill to extend the life of the Watergate grand jury, which expires Dec. 4, for six months and authorize the District Court to grant a second six months if necessary. The full Judiciary Committee is expected to take up the measure today.

Philip A. Lacovara, counsel to the special prosecutor, told the subcommittee "we believe it most likely that the Watergate investigation will be completed and the appropriate action taken by the grand jury well before the first extension period expires."

He said the idea of continuing the same panel originated with the jurors, not the prosecutors—"the consensus of the grand jurors was that they want to see this matter through."

Former Attorney General Elliot L. Richardson, who resigned because of the Cox firing, had endorsed the extension legislation. Lacovara said he discussed the matter specifically with Robert H. Bork, who took over as acting Attor-

ney General, and that Bork reaffirmed support of the bill.

The legislation would apply only to the original Watergate grand jury, which is concerned with the break-in of Democratic national headquarters and the alleged coverup of the involvement of White House and Nixon campaign personnel. A second grand jury, impaneled in August, is considering other related matters, such as campaign funds. It has 15 months more of life.

Reminded that Judiciary Committee Chairman Peter W. Rodino Jr. (D-N.J.) had asked the Justice Department for assurances that the files of the prosecutor's office would be preserved, Ruth said the staff had obtained a protective order from U.S. District Court Judge John J. Sirica.