

Saxbe Issues Denial That He Advocated Destroying of Tapes

WASHINGTON, Nov. 5 (AP) — Senator William B. Saxbe, the Attorney General-designate, denied Monday having advocated destruction of the White House Watergate tapes if they proved to be incriminating.

The Republican from Ohio was quoted by The Hong Kong Standard on Aug. 23 as having said during a speech to the local chapter of the American Chamber of Commerce:

"I think the President is right on standing on his rights not to release the tapes. I personally wish I had never heard of the tapes. If they're incriminating, they should be destroyed, and I'm sure they will; but I think he's right in saying that a President cannot be horsed around in the courts." Senator Saxbe, nominated last week by President Nixon to head the Justice Department, issued this statement Monday:

"If the question is, was I advocating any illegal activity in the Hong Kong speech, the answer obviously is no. In response to a question after the Hong Kong speech, I indicated that if there was illegal activity recorded on the tapes, I questioned whether such tapes would ever be forthcoming."

He also said that he recalled indicating that because Mr. Nixon and others had known recording devices were installed in Presidential offices, "I considered it highly unlikely that anything embarrassing would have been said under those circumstances." Earlier, a spokesman for Mr. Saxbe had said the Senator did not recall making the statement attributed by the Hong Kong newspaper.