

Nixon's Lawyers Talk With Probers

Washington

Lawyers for the White House and the Senate Watergate committee met last night to discuss the committee's request for a meeting with President Nixon.

Neither side would discuss anything that may have been resolved at the meeting.

In the past, the White House has rejected overtures from committee, contending that the doctrine of executive privilege protected the President from being questioned by the Senators.

Samuel Dash, the committee's chief counsel, and the Republican counsel, Fred Thompson, met for about 45 minutes with the President's top lawyers, Leonard Garment, the White House Counsel, and J. Fred Buzhardt, Jr., the special counsel, in Buzhardt's office at the White House.

CORDIALITY

A spokesman for Garment would say only that the meeting was "cordial." Dash said, "My mission as counsel is to report back to the committee and that's what I am going to do."

The committee decided Monday to ask its staff to explore with the White House whether Mr. Nixon would be willing to meet with the committee's members and, if so, under what conditions.

At the committee's public hearing yesterday, a fundraiser for President Nixon vigorously denied the allegation made Wednesday that the President's campaign finance chairman, Maurice H. Stans, had promised to help a Florida home-builder settle his problems with the Federal Housing Administration in return for a sizeable campaign contribution.

John J. Priestes told the committee under oath Wednesday that his contribution had been solicited last year by Benjamin Fernandez, chairman of the National Hispanic Finance Committee for the Re-election of the President.

Priestes, who in three years rose to become one of Miami's biggest home builders, is to start a one-year prison sentence next week. He pleaded guilty to two counts of receiving kickbacks from home builders and to one count of receiving



AP Wirephoto

BENJAMIN FERNANDEZ

'Appalled and Shocked'

Priestes testified that Fernandez had introduced him to Stans in Washington and that Stans had said, "I'll see what we can do. If we can't do any good for you, we'll return the check to you."

Yesterday, Fernandez called Priestes a "liar" and added, "I am appalled, shocked and disgusted with the tenor of his testimony." He made a point-by-point contradiction of Priestes' testimony. Fernandez said that Priestes had first made contact with him.

Fernandez denied that he had ever promised any favors in exchange for Priestes' donation.

Priestes contended that Fernandez had asked him for a \$100,000 contribution, had told him that the first check should be for \$25,000 and has asked for the money in cash. Fernandez said that the \$100,000 figure was never mentioned, that the \$25,000 check was volunteered and that there was never a discussion of a cash contribution.

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