

SAXBE SUPPORTED BY SENATE PANEL

It Also Asks Nixon Pledge on
Independent Watergate Aide

Special to The New York Times

WASHINGTON, Dec. 13—The Senate Judiciary Committee voted 15 to 1 today to approve the nomination of Senator William B. Saxbe of Ohio as Attorney General.

It also decided to ask President Nixon to supply the committee with an assurance of independence for the special Watergate prosecutor. And while some members of the committee indicated that the Saxbe nomination would be that sent to the Senate immediately, for a vote either tomorrow or Monday, a few committee aides suggested that the vote might be delayed if Mr. Nixon declined to answer the request for the assurance.

Several of the Democratic members of the committee had tried earlier to postpone the committee vote on the nomination until Mr. Nixon provided them with a written promise of independence for the special prosecutor, Leon Jaworski.

Ervin Votes Against Saxbe

They gave in to their colleagues' opposition this afternoon, however, during a two-and-a-half hour closed meeting in the office of Senator Hugh Scott of Pennsylvania, a committee member and the minority leader of the Senate. The compromise that was worked out, according to Senator Philip A. Hart, Democrat of Michigan, one of those who had wanted the delay, was that Mr. Scott would ask Mr. Nixon for an "explanation of what the President believes to be the independence and jurisdiction of the special prosecutor."

As a result, the only vote cast against Mr. Saxbe in the committee was that of Senator Sam J. Ervin Jr., Democrat of North Carolina, who, according to committee members, voted solely on constitutional grounds—feeling, as some other Senators and some lawyers do, that Mr. Saxbe's nomination is barred by a clause in the Constitution that prohibits Congressmen from being appointed to offices whose salaries have been increased by Congress during their terms in office.

Congress had attempted to skirt this clause by passing a bill, signed by Mr. Nixon on Tuesday, that cuts the Attorney General's salary from \$60,000 to \$35,000, thus wiping out the raise voted by Congress during Mr. Saxbe's term there.

Senator Saxbe, a 57-year-old Republican who says he could be described as a "hard liner" on law enforcement, was called in for part of the closed meeting this afternoon.

Senators Termed Impressed

The Senator, who had been to the White House earlier in the day for what he described as a "housekeeping" session with Gen. Alexander M. Haig Jr., President Nixon's chief of staff, said after leaving Mr. Scott's office that he had been called in because the committee members were worried about the extent of independence that the President would allow Mr. Jaworski.

One committee member said later that the Senators were impressed by Mr. Saxbe's statement that he was "not going to go down and fetch and carry" orders from the White House to Mr. Jaworski.