

New Authority in Watergate Probe

The Senate Watergate committee won statutory authority yesterday to seek help from the federal courts in obtaining some of President Nixon's tape recordings and documents.

A bill granting the U.S.

District Court here jurisdiction over any suit on Watergate subpoenas became law at midnight without the President's signature.

Mr. Nixon had refused to supply the materials, and the district court had disclaimed jurisdiction to enforce the committee's subpoenas for them.

Like the Watergate special prosecution force, the Senate committee has been seeking tapes and documents since early last summer. Both subpoenaed the President on July 23 to produce certain documents and records.

The special Watergate prosecutor won his case, although Archibald Cox, the original prosecutor, was dis-

missed over the controversy. Elliot L. Richardson, then the attorney general, resigned and William D. Ruckelshaus, his deputy, was fired rather than obey a presidential order to dismiss Cox.

The Senate committee, however, lost its separate case. Chief Judge John J. Sirica ruled that the federal courts had no jurisdiction to enforce a congressional committee's subpoena of White House material.

To overcome the judge's objection, Congress passed a bill specifically granting the district court here jurisdiction over any suit on Watergate subpoenas.

The President had ten working days to consider what action to take. That deadline was at midnight last night.

Under the constitution, a president can veto any bill, allow it to become law without his signature or sign it into law. A two-third majority of both houses of congress is needed to override a veto.

The White House has in recent weeks been pledging openness and has released a number of tapes and documents sought by the Watergate special prosecutor.

The committee is seeking more than a dozen White House tapes and documents. Many of them are related to pledges, some stretching back three years, of several million dollars in campaign contributions from the Associated Milk Products, Inc.

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