

# Senators Offer a Tape Compromise

## Washington

The Senate Watergate committee told a U.S. Court of Appeals yesterday that it is willing to compromise in its battle to obtain five subpoenaed presidential tape recordings.

The panel said that as a last resort it would agree to a "stringent protective order" that would prevent disclosure of the contents of the tapes now but leave the door open to their future release.

It said it also would "ensure that the tapes are in the public domain and will not be forever hidden under a cloak of secrecy from the public that has the right, at some time, to know their contents."

In a brief accompanying its appeal, the committee

said that it now fears the tapes of President Nixon's conversations with key Watergate figures never will be made public.

It said there is reason to believe all of the Watergate cases may be settled by guilty pleas or that the tapes may not be admitted into evidence if there are trials.

And it said there is no certainty that they would be made public during any impeachment process.

On February 8, U.S. District Judge Gerhard A. Gesell ruled that "the public interest does not require that the President should be forced to provide evidence . . . to a Senate committee in order to furnish fuel for future hearings."

*Associated Press*