

Comment by Saxbe on Impeach Proceedings

Washington.

Attorney General William B. Saxbe said yesterday that permitting president Nixon's chief Watergate lawyer to participate in the House Judiciary Committee's impeachment proceedings would please the American people's "sense of fair play."

Citing a White House brief to be filed with the committee urging that attorney James D. St. Clair take part, Saxbe said he found the arguments "reasonable," adding that lawyers for impeachment targets had participated in the past.

Though Saxbe said the decision "is entirely for the judiciary committee to make," his remarks at a meeting with newsmen de-

parted from his practice of avoiding comment on the impeachment proceedings.

"The amount of interjection of cross-examination by St. Clair is entirely up to the committee chairman," Saxbe said. The attorney general said that if the House committee rejected the White House's bid to take part, the decision could not be appealed.

Saxbe also took issue with a bill by Senator Sam J. Ervin Jr. (Dem-N.C.) that would make the Justice Department a separate government agency — removed from the executive branch.

"I don't think the country is ready for this bill," he said.

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