

Percy Hits Nixon Subpoena Delays

Washington

Senator Charles H. Percy (Rep.-Ill.), said yesterday that President Nixon appears to be obstructing justice by stalling on subpoenas issued by the House Judiciary Committee and the special prosecutor's office.

Percy also said Republicans were "whistling in the dark" if they believe Watergate would not be an important issue in the fall elections. He said the party will make no gains in either chamber of Congress because of both Watergate and inflation.

The senator was interviewed on ABC's "Issues and Answers."

"I continue to see reluctance, dragging of feet, almost what might be considered the hinderance of justice here, an obstruction of justice," Percy said of the White House delays to subpoenas for tapes and documents.

"I feel we are moving toward a very dangerous position of confrontation if the subpoenas of both the House and the special prosecutor are not lived up to."

Percy later added: "It would appear that there is now a chance that justice is being impeded. I know the work of the grand jurors is being impeded and slowed up because Mr. (Leon) Jaworski (Watergate special prosecutor) in a letter to me this week indicated that much to me in much those same words."

A spokesman for Percy said later that the letter from Jaworski was dated April 12 and said: "The failure to provide this required evidence is now impeding these grand jury investigations."

A high-ranking White House aide indicated last week that Mr. Nixon would not comply fully with the House subpoena for tapes and documents relating to 42 presidential conversations. But he indicated the White House would supply the committee with verbatim transcripts of most of the conversations.

The deadline arrives Thursday on the Judiciary Committee's subpoena and May 2 on Jaworski's.

Percy, who has mapped his own strategy for seeking the 1976 GOP presidential nomination, said he would not be satisfied with White House-prepared transcripts of the tapes and thought a refusal by the President to offer anything but the tapes themselves could end up in a bill of impeachment prepared in the House.

Regarding the fall elec-

tions, Percy said "There is no possibility of us (Republicans) picking up in the House or the Senate. The question is how much damage is going to be done." He said the economy would be stronger by fall, but doubted inflation would be significantly slowed.

"I'm more concerned about inflation than anything else. We do not have, and have not to date demonstrated, our ability to control that. Watergate will be with us in the fall and we're whistling in the dark if we think it won't be."

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