

Public to Get Report on Tape Gap

Washington

The final report by experts who studied the 18½ minute gap in one of President Nixon's key Watergate tapes will be made public in about two weeks, Judge John J. Sirica said yesterday.

In a series of closed hearings on Mr. Nixon's Watergate conversations, Sirica

also took under advisement a motion by the White House to quash special prosecutor Leon Jaworski's subpoena for further Presidential tapes.

Sirica's clerk said the ruling on the motion to quash probably will not come before next week.

Mr. Nixon's Watergate lawyer, James D. St. Clair,

has argued that release of the tapes sought by Jaworski would be contrary to the public interest.

The hearing concerned Jaworski's efforts to force Mr. Nixon to comply with an April 18 subpoena for tapes and other documents pertaining to 64 conversations Mr. Nixon had with former aides after the Watergate break-in.

St. Clair has said the White House will relinquish no more tapes or evidence and will — if necessary — fight the subpoena to the Supreme Court.

The morning meeting on the tape gap report was attended by White House lawyers, Watergate prosecutors and Charles S. Rhyne, attorney for Mr. Nixon's personal secretary, Rose Mary Woods.

The tape involved a meeting between Mr. Nixon and H. R. Haldeman, then his chief of staff, on June 20, 1972 — three days after the Watergate break-in. Miss Woods testified she might have caused a gap of four to five minutes accidentally while transcribing the tapes, but did not know what happened to the rest of the missing conversation.

In its preliminary report in December, the panel said the gap was caused by at least five and perhaps as many as nine separate erasures — all done manually — and strongly suggested the erasures were deliberate. A grand jury is investigating.

Sirica said after the two-hour meeting that the White

House can disclose its own technical report on the gap when the report is made public.

It was decided at the meeting that the report — a draft of which was given to Sirica May 4 — is to be "printed as soon as possible for final submission to the court."

"Upon formal receipt of the court it will be entered in the public record," Sirica said. "The court expects to receive the report in approximately two weeks. There are no plans to conduct hearings related to the report."

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