

# Ziegler Attack On News Leaks

Washington

Ronald L. Ziegler, President Nixon's press secretary, yesterday criticized news leaks he said distorted the President's characterization of the events of March 21, 1973.

According to members of the House Judiciary Committee on Wednesday, Mr. Nixon said at the beginning of a 15-minute dictabelt recording of the March 21 events that "it was an uneventful day."

Ziegler said that the complete Nixon quotation was as follows: "As far as the day was concerned, it was uneventful except for the talk with Dean."

Mr. Nixon was referring to his conversation with former White House counsel John W. Dean III who told Mr. Nixon of the coverup in March, 1973 and who later, in testimony before the Senate Watergate committee, implicated the President. Nixon said March 21, 1973 was the day he first learned of the Watergate coverup.

Ziegler cited the incomplete quotation, emanating from the committee's closed session, as "an example of the distortion and piecemeal

presentation of this material in stories that ran across the country . . . leaving all the negative connotations.

"The fact is whoever provided this information, not only distorted it, but cut the sentence in half as it is heard on the Dictabelt."

Ziegler said that he was not breaking the rules by talking about the evidence but was making "this one exception" in explaining why the White House was demanding that the Judiciary Committee hearings be open or that the full record of the Watergate proceedings be made public.

"The leaks continue in violation of the committee rules," he said. "A distorted presentation of the evidence continues and yet it appears that chairman (Peter W.) Rodino will not open the House Judiciary Committee proceeding to permit the American people to get an undistorted picture of the evidence.

"If the committee is not going to open up its hearings, it has a responsibility to release the full record of their closed proceedings on Watergate."

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