

Weicker Assails Lack Of Watergate Reforms

Washington

Senator Lowell P. Weicker Jr. (Rep-Conn.), embittered by the lack of reform in the wake of Watergate, accused Congress, the press and the public yesterday of inviting future mischief by forgetting the scandal too soon.

Weicker said it is time something is done — pointing out that none of the 98 Watergate-related bills introduced in Congress has passed.

"How's that for a two-year congressional record of straightening out the greatest scandal in the history of United States politics and government?" he said in opening Senate testimony.

Weicker was a member of the Senate Watergate committee and also sits on the Senate's Government Operations Committee, which is considering a political reform bill based on recommendations of the Watergate panel.

It would, among other things, set up an office of public attorney, independent of the White House and the Justice Department, to

investigate and prosecute abuses of power in the executive branch.

Weicker also criticized the public for "continuing to invite political mischief" by staying away from the polls in record numbers, and accused the press of failing to keep digging into government wrong-doing now that Watergate is over.

Former Senator Sam J. Ervin Jr. (Dem-N.C.), who was chairman of the Watergate Committee, declined to testify on the reform bill. But the vice chairman Howard H. Baker Jr. (Rep-Tenn.), did appear — cautioning against going too far.

Baker said a permanent independent prosecutor might be unconstitutional and suggested instead a division of government crimes in the Justice Department to deal with illegal acts whether found in the executive, congress or the courts.

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