

Senate Plan to Prevent Watergate Scandals

Washington

After 14 months of deliberation, a Senate committee approved a sweeping legislative proposal yesterday designed to help prevent future Watergate scandals.

In reporting the measure to the Senate, the chairman of the Senate Government Operations Committee, Abraham Ribicoff (Dem.-Conn.), said the bill is aimed at assuring the accountability of all high federal officials regardless of which branch of government they serve.

The principal sections of the bill set up a division of government crimes in the Justice Department, provide for creating a temporary special prosecutor when one is needed and provide for public financial disclosure by all top officials, from the President on down.

The bill is an outgrowth of recommendations first made in the final report of the Senate Watergate committee.

It recommends that cases involving criminal charges against government employees be handled by a Division of Government Crimes in the Justice Department to be headed by an assistant attorney general appointed by the President and confirmed by the Senate.

It also calls for the appointment of a temporary special prosecutor whenever serious allegations are made against top members of an incumbent administration.

"This proposal will avoid in the future the situation where high-level members of an incumbent

administration are investigating themselves," Ribicoff said.

The legislation calls on the attorney general to actually name the special prosecutor. But it authorizes the U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia to appoint one if he does not act.

In perhaps its most sweeping innovation, the new bill requires "full and complete" financial disclosure by all government employees earning more than about \$36,000 a year.

This would include the President, vice president, Cabinet members, all high-level executive branch officials and all senators, House members and judges — about 15,000 persons in all.

All would be required to file annual financial statements, which would be maintained by the General Accounting Office and be open to inspection and copying by any member of the public.

The disclosure provision of the bill provides criminal penalties of up to \$10,000 fine and a one-year prison term for willfully failing to report or for falsifying information.

Associated Press

U.S. 'Isolationism'

New York

Vice President Nelson A. Rockefeller said Thursday there is real concern abroad that the United States is moving into "a new type of isolationism" but that he feels the concern is unfounded.

Associated Press