

Ehrlichman says Nixon indispensable witness

WASHINGTON [UPI] - Under intensive cross-examination, defendant H.R. Haldeman said Friday President Richard Nixon was rejecting both hush money and clemency for the Watergate burglars when he said "it's wrong, that's for sure."

In another development at the Watergate cover-up trial, defendants Robert Mardian and Kenneth Parkinson opposed a suggestion that the jury be sent home for the holidays and brought back in January when Nixon would be physically able to testify by deposition.

Assistant prosecutor Richard Ben-Veniste questioned Haldeman closely about the meaning of remarks Nixon made in a taped conversation with aides on March 21, 1973, when the Watergate cover-up was faltering. Nixon said "it's wrong" only once, midway through the conversation about possible clemency and financial payments to the Watergate burglars. Haldeman stands accused of lying at the 1973 Senate Watergate

hearings when he testified Nixon had rejected much money payment as wrong.

Ben-Veniste led Haldeman through 12 references to the possible payment of up to \$1

SAN CLEMENTE, Calif. (UPI)-Former President Richard Nixon's phlebitis condition has improved and he will soon be able to gradually increase his physical activity, his doctor said Wednesday. However, the report also indicated no change in the long period of convalescence which prevents Nixon from testifying in the Watergate trial in Washington.

million in the tape transcripts and contended the remark that "it's wrong" followed a discussion of clemency, not hush money. Haldeman insisted the remark referred to both clemency and money.

"That was my state of mind at

that time," he said

In three previous days of testimony, Haldeman, formerly Nixon's top White House aide, maintained he did not know the full story of the Watergate cover-up until nine months after the break-in at Democratic national headquarters.

Haldeman also filed his own motion asking that a deposition be taken from Nixon. Defendant John Ehrlichman has declared Nixon an indispensable witness for his defense and proposed the sequestered jury be allowed to take a holiday break at home while awaiting the medical deadline for Nixon's availability to give a deposition at his San Clemente, Calif. home, Jan. 6.

But Mardian, a former deputy attorney general, and Parkinson, a former Nixon campaign lawyer, said they would not waive their rights to keep the jury sequestered.

Sirica deferred until Thursday a ruling on Ehrlichman's claim he cannot get a fair trial without Nixon's testimony.

upi roundup

Miners ratify wage contract

CHARLESTON W. Va. - The nation's miners have ratified a wage contract with the soft coal industry and United Mine Workers President Arnold Miller will announce Thursday an official end to the 24-day strike which jolted the U.S. economy. The contract provides for a 10 per cent wage increase the first year, 4 per cent in the second year and 3 per cent in third year. It also contains a cost of living clause, which miners have never had in previous agreements.

Ford asks Congress for vet money

WASHINGTON President Ford today asked for nearly \$814 million in supplemental appropriations to finance a 23 per cent increase in veterans educational benefits which Congress enacted over his veto Tuesday. Noting in a letter to Speaker Carl Albert that the supplemental request was necessitated by the congressional override of my veto, "Ford acted just one day after the House and Senate overwhelmingly overrode his veto. Ford said the 23 per cent increase in benefits would amount to \$813.7 million and asked Congress to approve it.

Safe water bill sent to President

WASHINGTON The House Tuesday passed and sent to President Ford a safe water bill that would set the first federal safety standards for household drinking water. The three-year, \$156 million bill includes a provision adopted in the Senate last week allowing private citizens to file court suits against local water utilities. The bill gives increased enforcement power to the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to assure compliance with the new standards on chemical, bacterial and other water contaminants and to protect underground sources of drinking water.

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