

Burger lambastes U.S. lawyers

NEW ORLEANS (AP) — Chief Justice Warren Burger, already under fire for questioning the competence of half the nation's trial lawyers, escalated his attack recently by declaring that all lawyers should have to earn the right to appear in court.

Calling trial lawyer incompetence "one of the most serious problems facing our profession," Burger told the American Bar Association (ABA) convention:

"Until we establish special standards for the right to appear in the courts, independent of admissions to the bar generally, we will not solve our problem. I

am persuaded that one of the major reasons for congestion and delay in the courts...is the inadequate performance of many lawyers who come into the courts."

Burger, the nation's highest-ranking judge, dedicated the major portion of his annual State of the Judiciary speech to the controversial issue of trial lawyer competence.

Nearly 230,000 of the nation's 400,000 lawyers are members of the ABA, an influential trade group.

Burger several times compared the legal and medical professions, once stating,

"The needs of a modern courtroom" can be analogical roughly to the needs of the modern operating room of the surgeon. In each situation special training and skills are not simply desirable, they are imperative in the public interest."

The ABA's governing body will consider a resolution this week from the Illinois Bar Association demanding that Burger either "publicly repudiate" comments he made last July about trial lawyer incompetence or provide proof of their accuracy.

The resolution was sparked by testimony Burger gave to the Royal Commission on Legal Services in London in which he

estimated that one half of U.S. trial lawyers are unqualified to represent their clients.

While the ABA's powerful board of governors has taken no position on the resolution from Illinois, national president William B. Spann of Atlanta called the chief justice's statistics "grossly disproportionate" and "exaggerated."

Spann said ABA studies point to a figure closer to 20 percent.

Here for the ABA convention, Attorney General Griffin Bell was drawn into the fracas when asked on a nationally televised interview program whether he agreed with Burger or Spann.

World at a glance

From Associated Press reports

Coal strike cuts Indiana power

The 70-day nationwide coal strike forced Indiana to order mandatory power cutbacks Monday and put other states within days of them. In West Virginia, tens of thousands of workers feared layoffs.

But a split in the United Mine Workers, which had scuttled a proposed settlement, only widened and Pres. Carter said he still had no plans to seek a court order forcing miners back to work.

Satellite to cost \$1 million

UNITED NATIONS — Canada's foreign minister said Monday his government will ask the Soviet Union to pay more than \$1 million as the cost of recovering radioactive debris from a Russian nuclear satellite that fell on the Canadian tundra.

Burial prompts Nazi salute

SOLTAU, West Germany (AP) — Nazi salutes by several mourners marked the burial Monday of convicted war criminal Herbert Kappler in the north German town where he died of cancer after fleeing an Italian prison hospital. At least four men raised their right arms in the banned gesture as they filed past the former Gestapo chief's grave, lined with pine branches, to scatter dirt or flowers on his brown wood coffin.

Bee swarm stings tower

SALTA, Argentina (AP) — A swarm of African killer bees attacked the airport control tower Monday, wounding a tower employee with numerous stings, police reported.

They said Ricardo Mamani was directing air traffic at Aybal airport in this northeast Argentine city nearly 1,000 miles northeast of Buenos Aires when the bees attacked.

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Sadat receives pat on back

SEATTLE (AP) — Egyptian Pres. Anwar Sadat apparently got what he wanted from a Seattle man. A little pat on the back. And encouragement to "hang in there."

Paul King, 39, said he was talking with other patrons at a restaurant about the Mideast situation a few weeks ago, shortly after peace talks between Israel and Egypt broke down. King said he went to a pay telephone and telegraphed Sadat.

"I said we appreciated his attempts for peace," King said, "just to tell him to hang in there. I didn't expect any response."

But a week ago, King's home phone rang. The voice on the other end identified the caller as Sadat, who had said earlier he wanted to increase

sympathy among Americans. "He told me he was Pres. Sadat and he thanked me for my message....I didn't know what to say," said King, an apprentice pressman at The Seattle Times.

King said his phone call came while Sadat met with Pres. Carter at Camp David, Md.

An Egyptian embassy official in Washington, D.C., said it was possible that Sadat called King, but no records were available of calls made from Camp David.

Half an hour after the call, King received a similar message from Western Union. A copy of the telegram arrived last Thursday.

"Thank you for your kind message through which you expressed your sincere sentiments toward my peace initiative," it read.

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