

Crime Wane Described

By Mitchell
Post-Alpha

Attorney General John N. Mitchell told a conference of law enforcement officials yesterday that "fear is being swept from the streets" because of President Nixon's leadership against crime.

"In 1968, Richard Nixon called for decisive action against the crime wave in this country," Mitchell said. "When he was elected President he instituted a comprehensive drive against crime ... a nation suddenly found that it had leadership in the war on crime."

Earlier, Jerris Leonard, chief of the Justice Department's Law Enforcement Assistance Administration, said that critics of the FBI's Uniform Crime Index — which showed a slower increase in the rate of serious crimes last year — were just mad because they had lost crime as a prime political issue.

Mitchell told the conference that crime rose 178 per cent in the last decade, when "we were beset by an alarming crime wave and many Americans believed our society was

beginning to crack at the seams."

The FBI says crime increased 11 per cent last year, compared with 12 per cent in 1969, and Mitchell pointed to the decline from 1968 — the last year of the Johnson administration — when crime rose 17 per cent.

With a renewed attack by local and state police, Mitchell said, the first encouraging results of this "monumental effort" are appearing and "fear is being swept from the streets of some — though not all — American cities."

"Crime has been slowed," Leonard told the two-day conference of 140 state and local law enforcement officers. "And because of that, there has been a speedup in another activity: criticism of the nationwide crime control program."

"I suggest that the crime criticism index parallels the crime index — the first goes up as the other goes down," he said.

The conference, supported by a \$52,154 Justice Department grant opened without the nation's number one policeman — FBI Director, J. Edgar Hoover. He declined the invitation of his boss, Attorney General Mitchell, to address a banquet last night. Leonard delivered the luncheon address, so Mitchell, the scheduled speaker, could fill in at the dinner.