

Ehrlichman Critical of Hearings

SEATTLE, Aug. 13 (AP)—Former presidential assistant John D. Ehrlichman said today that he thinks the Senate Watergate hearings are destructive to the country, but it is too soon to assess their long-range impact.

"At this point, I can't say whether they're of lasting benefit" or harm, Ehrlichman told a news conference.

Ehrlichman, back in his Seattle home after his resignation as President Nixon's top domestic adviser April 30 and his recent testimony before the Watergate panel, predicted Mr. Nixon would soon rebound from the scandal that has shaken his administration.

The 48-year-old Ehrlichman, standing just 30 feet from the shore of Lake Washington in his front yard, said he expects Mr. Nixon to demonstrate a fresh "force and vitality" in coming months.

Specifically, Ehrlichman said, he expects the President to reassert himself in dealings with Congress.

Ehrlichman suggested that most Americans are in sympathy with the Nixon administration on the Watergate matter. He said the thousands of letters he has received from across the country supporting him are "just the tip of the iceberg."

He said the committee headed by Sen. Sam J. Ervin Jr. (D-N.C.) "weighed what they see as the national interest versus the rights of individuals" and came down against the individuals."