

Fielding, Deputy Counsel to Nixon, Resigning to Resume Law Practice

SAN CLEMENTE, Calif., Jan. 11 (AP) — Fred J. Fielding, former chief assistant to John W. Dean III, is resigning as deputy White House counsel and returning to the private practice of law.

Sources at the Western White House confirmed the 34-year-old Fielding's imminent departure but denied a report that Bruce Kehrli, a protege of H. R. Haldeman, also planned to resign soon. Kehrli, staff secretary, made an unannounced flight here recently to join the presidential party.

Both Fielding and Kehrli testified at the trial of the Watergate burglars and both were witnesses to the opening of the White House safe of E.

Howard Hunt two days after the 1972 break-in at Democratic National Committee headquarters. Kehrli also was the second witness before the Senate Watergate committee last May.

There has been no suggestion that either man was connected with any wrongdoing. Dean, fired as White House counsel last April 30, testified that Fielding had acted as an innocent messenger in carrying \$350,000 in cash from the Committee for the Re-election of the President to Haldeman, who ostensibly kept it for a time to finance "polling" activities.

A source close to Fielding said the deputy counsel, who

joined the White House staff from a Philadelphia law firm in 1970, had wanted to return to private practice for some time but delayed resigning lest anyone conclude it was related to the Watergate scandal.