

# State Bar Probing Nixon--a Report

By Michael Taylor

The State Bar will begin investigations today which could lead to the disbarment in California of President Nixon and five other lawyers because of Watergate, authoritative source said yesterday.

The State Bar's board of governors voted 11 to 2 Friday to begin an investigation of violations of ethics, based on complaints from local bar associations as well as letters from citizens, the sources said.

In addition to the President, those under investigation are:

- John Ehrlichman, Mr. Nixon's former chief domestic affairs adviser. Ehrlichman received his law degree from Stanford University and is a member of both the California and state of Washington bars.

- Herbert Kalmbach of Newport Beach, the President's former personal attorney.

- Donald H. Segretti, a Los Angeles attorney and former Treasury Department lawyer under indictment for alleged "dirty tricks" during the Florida presidential primary election in 1972.

- Gordon G. Strachan, former aide to H. R. Halde- man, the President's former chief of staff.

- Robert C. Mardian, former Justice Department official and political coordinator for the Committee to Re-elect the President.

## DENIAL

While State Bar president Leonard S. Janofsky of Los Angeles denied the report of the possible investigation, most other members of the State Bar's board merely said they would neither confirm nor deny it.

One member of the board said, however "Of course, it's true," referring to the

reports that had been sweeping the state's legal circles for the past two weeks.

A spokesman for the State Bar said that when complaints are received, the bars 18 staff attorneys "usually make a preliminary investigation to see if there's any reason to go further."

## CASES

He said an average of 3000 complaints are received each year, about "95 per cent of them from people disappointed because their lawyers may have lost their cases."

But if the initial investigation holds up, secret hearings are conducted by the State Bar's disciplinary committee.

The committee can privately or publicly issue a re-approval — "which is usually not the case," according to one source — or it can recommend to the State Supreme Court that the attorney in question be either suspended or disbarred.

If the high court approves the recommendation, the attorney in question may not practice law in California.

## CRIME

A spokesman for the State Bar said an attorney does not necessarily have to have been convicted of a crime to be disbarred. Instead, he said, most proceedings stem from charges of "moral turpitude or violations of ethics."

One source said Ehrlichman's recent Senate committee testimony defending the break-in at the office of Daniel Ellsberg's psychiatrist, "already constitutes an obstruction of justice, even if he rationalized it from the point of view of national security."

White House deputy press secretary Gerald Warren said last night, "We have no comment on this matter."