

## **PARTY HEADS DEBATE WATERGATE IMPACT**

WASHINGTON, Sept. 24 (AP) —The Democrats have failed to make a public-gripping issue of the Watergate affair, Senator Robert J. Dole of Kansas said today, but Lawrence F. O'Brien predicted that plenty of activity on Capitol Hill would keep alive the alleged political espionage aimed at Democratic headquarters.

Senator Dole, chairman of the Republican National Committee, and Mr. O'Brien, campaign director for the Democratic Presidential candidate, Senator George McGovern, agreed, but only to a degree, that Mr. McGovern would improve his present standing in the polls—as much as 34 points behind President Nixon.

Mr. O'Brien predicted "a very close election, like 1960 or 1968." But Senator Dole would only say that he expected "some slippage," not enough to threaten Mr. Nixon's lead.

Mr. Dole and Mr. O'Brien confronted each other on the television-radio program "Issues and Answers" on the American Broadcasting Company network.