The 'President's Lawyer' The 'Good Guy' Mitchell Imag

By Haynes Johnson Times-Post Service

Washington

In that wonderful way of Washington, now there is another political pheno-menon to ponder.

John Mitchell, that supposedly fearsome repressor of radical rhetoric, has been transformedinto a good guy of American government, Atleast that's the picture that emerged clearly yesterday

when the president's lawyer, as his wife Martha likes to call him, met the press for the firsttmein exactly a year.

The Attorney Geeral, holding court in the great Hall of Justice, was a kindly and conciliatory figure. He hada good wordforall-for blacks, for students, for dissenters, for Congress, for the Supreme Court, for individual rights.

To every questio, about

virtually every problem thathas arisen in the last year from Spiro Agnew's comments to Cambodia and the campuses, Mitchell responded with patience and humor.

He never-ever-raised his voice in anger. When Sarah McClendon, a reporter with a penchant for asking needling and rhetorical questions, warned thatshe was going to give him a "long and in-volved" one, Mitchell said "so what's new?" He saidit softly, and with a smile.

For the restof the hourlong conference, the President's former law partner anda man with a reputation as the recluse of he administration, was clearly in command, as he fielded questions ranging from the 18-year-old vote th wiretapping to black panthers, from impeachment proceedings against Supreme Court Justice William O. Douglas, to political prob-lems confronting the Nixon Administration.

As he remarked lightly at ne point, any good lawyer cantakeany side of a case and argue it with equal ability. Butfor Mitchell there as clearly only one clientto bedefended yesterday—the Administration. He presented thatcase in low key; if there were any problems, it was because of a misunderstan-ding of he Administration's true motives.

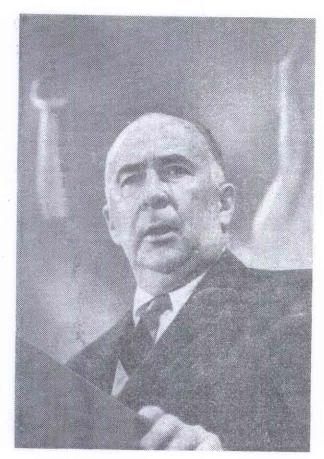
"If the campuses as such look upon what we're doing as represensive, it's because they're not getting the mes-sage," he said, in presponse to one question.

The samewas true of certain spokesmenin the black community who have criticized the administration.

In the same vein, he spoke positively about the necessity to end discriminatory practices in southern schools. Mitchell saidhe sees the day coming son "when desegregation will be accepted as a fact of life" and the process of education can go forward.

He went on record as saying he thinks that time is fast approaching. After the 1970-71 school year, he said, "not only will the school districts in the South have converted" from dealto unitary systems, but that "most of the irritants" produced by desegregation "will be behind us . .

At the outset, Mitchell dealt with other critics who have questioned whether the administration really is squarely behind the right of 18 year olds to vote. He is writing all 50 state governors, he said, requesting written assurances by August 3 that they are taking all necessary steps to comply with the 1970 voting rights act amendments.



ATTORNEY-GENERAL JOHN MITCHELL Kindness and concern for all