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Finch: Watergate Issue Is a Dud

As a campaign issue, the Watergate case is a dud.

That's the way Presidential adviser Robert H. Finch sees it because "nobody believes President Nixon had something to do with it which is true."

Yet, Finch told The Examiner editorial board yesterday, almost everywhere his travels take him, the first question newsmen ask usually involves the break-in and bugging of Democratic National Headquarters.

The men caught with burglary and electronic gear at Watergate, some of them with high level Republican connections, have been indicted, Finch noted, and he predicted they will get "stiff sentences."

"Watergate is having no

impact on the polls," he said.

Finch has campaigned for Nixon in 19 states and is optimistic about Nov. 7.

"In California," he said, "I don't think we're as far ahead as Field says."

Mervyn Field's California Poll this week reported that Nixon has moved from 8 to 14 percentage points ahead of Sen. George McGovern.

"Our poll says the President went up from 9 to 11."

Finch, who resigned as lieutenant governor to join the Nixon Cabinet in 1969, said, "I'm getting a lot of free advice on 1974."

But he still plans to wait until January before deciding whether to seek public office again, either that of governor or U.S. senator.