

# Reaction of Weinberger And Bay Congressmen

By George Murphy

The reaction of Bay Area Congressmen to yesterday's Watergate developments ranged from restrained approval to "it's about time."

A U.S. Senator from California said he assumes "this is only the beginning."

And a Cabinet Secretary admitted he had been wrong when he called Watergate "essentially ephemeral."

The housecleaning at the White House, said Secretary of Health, Education and Welfare Caspar Weinberger in San Francisco, "should go far toward restoring the public confidence in government."

His remarks — as with all of the others contacted by The Chronicle — were made before President Nixon's televised address last night.

Weinberger told a press conference at Civic Auditorium he no longer thinks the Watergate affair is ephemeral, as he had said recently.

"But I still hope that when the history of this administration is written, it (Watergate) will be seen to be of something less than major importance."

"I don't think, however, it does much good for me to comment more when I don't know that much about the investigation."

Democratic Senator John V. Tunney said he was "pleased that the President has begun cleaning house in the aftermath of the sordid Watergate affair."

"I assume this is only the beginning, for the tentacles

in the . . . case have been seen to reach extensively into the administration and the President's re-election campaign."

Tunney, as did some of the others, called for a special prosecutor to be named to handle the case, "someone of the stature of former Chief Justice Earl Warren."

Republican Congressman William S. Mailliard of San Francisco said, "I've felt all along they (the administration) made a mistake in not getting somebody in the act as . . . a special prosecutor."

"But with (newly appointed Elliot) Richardson taking over as Attorney General, I don't feel that strongly. I have great confidence in him, and there has been no suggestion of even peripheral involvement (in the Watergate affair). (Former Attorney General) Dick Kleindienst, while quite capable, was rather heavily involved in the political aspects, I thought."

Another Republican Congressman, Paul N. McCloskey of Palo Alto, said, "In many respects, appointing Richardson is the best thing the President has done, because that indicates the importance he gives the Justice Department."

"Richardson, of all his people, is the man of most unquestioned integrity."

But McCloskey said he still feels a special prosecutor should be appointed, "a tough, able prosecutor with no political background in either party, a man who will

put the law above any responsiveness to the presidency."

Congressman Jerome Waldie (Dem-Antioch) said his reaction to the developments was twofold:

"I'm not pleased to find corruption so close to the President. But the silver lining is that this will bring the President up very short in his search for power . . . The lack of confidence the President will engender in the people will make it far more difficult for him to trample on the legislative and judicial branches — as well as on the press — and that's healthy."

## BURTON

Democratic Congressman Phillip Burton of San Francisco said he felt yesterday's action was "long overdue."

He added, "I fully support the position of the American Bar Association which calls for the appointment of a special prosecutor in the Watergate affair."

Congressman Fortney H. Stark (Dem-Alameda) called Watergate "the most sordid scandal of the century."

"The resignations . . . indicate that Mr. Nixon may be pushed into telling us the truth."

"The President has avoided the truth in the Vietnam war, and now on the serious issue of bombing Cambodia."

"He has either been engaged in outright lies or in the serious sin of omitting truth as he has attempted to pretend the Watergate does not exist."