

# U.S. Aide Denies Segretti Delay

JACKSONVILLE (Fla.) — (UPI) — U.S. attorney John Briggs denied yesterday that he had stalled proceedings against California lawyer Donald H. Segretti, indicted for allegedly distributing a phony campaign letter accusing Senators Henry Jackson and Hubert Humphrey of sexual misconduct.

Jackson blasted Briggs' handling of the case just hours after a federal grand jury in Orlando returned the indictment against Segretti and Tampa accountant George A. Hearing. It accused them of conspiring to write and circulate the bogus letter on Sen. Edmund Muskie's campaign stationery during the Florida Democratic primary in March of 1972.

Jackson called Briggs' "delay" in bringing the indictments "reprehensible" and said "he did nothing about this until the full bloom of Watergate has reached the point where they all were running for cover . . ."

### Committee Agrees

Jackson said the Senate committee probing the Watergate scandal had agreed Friday to look into Briggs' handling of the case against Segretti and Hearing.

Briggs, however, "absolutely and unequivocally" denied Jackson's charges of stalling the investigation.

But he did link the indictments with the time sequence

of the expanding developments in the Watergate case.

"I don't think it's any secret that the Department of Justice funnels information from one federal district to another as it is obtained," Briggs said. "I also think it is public knowledge that the major breakthroughs in this matter came in the last few months."

### More Indictments?

Briggs hinted the grand jury in Orlando might return more indictments in the case of the phony campaign letter, probably within two weeks.

Segretti, a 31-year-old attorney who, according to former acting FBI Director L. Patrick Gray, was paid at least \$30,000 from President Nixon's re election campaign funds, surrendered in Los Angeles Friday night and Hearing surrendered in Tampa. Both were released on bond.

Briggs blamed part of the delay on the "laborious process" of establishing grounds and obtaining the authority to grant immunity to one of the witnesses who appeared before the federal grand jury in Orlando.

Although Briggs declined to name the witness given immunity, it was reported to be Robert Milton Benz, the former head of the Tampa Young Republicans. Benz, 25, was not indicted by the grand jury but was named as a "co-conspirator."