

Gardner Hits Nixon Speech

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Washington

Directly challenging President Nixon's suggestion that Americans put Watergate behind them, Common Cause chairman John Gardner said yesterday the scandal is "the most important question facing the people today."

Gardner said he felt Mr. Nixon could not have sensed the scandal's impact when he urged the nation last Wednesday to shift attention from Watergate to other pressing problems.

"When Mr. Nixon says we must put this behind us in order to deal with more im-

portant things, he fails to see that this is the most important thing."

"The responsiveness of our government, the extent of which the functioning of our government was broken down, is the most important question facing the American people today."

Gardner, ex-HEW Secretary, said the most disturbing feature of the Watergate affair was the failure of those involved to see the importance of law as the basis for government.

He was interviewed on NBC's Meet The Press.

United Press