

From 'hired gun' to top lawman

Examiner News Services

WASHINGTON — With the resignation and firing of the No. 1 and No. 2 men in the Justice Department the mantle of the attorney generalship has fallen on Solicitor General Robert H. Bork.

Bork is the nation's solicitor general, the man who represents the government in cases before the Supreme Court. He has held the post since June 27.

He has been called a "conservative in radical's clothing" because he wears a modified red beard that belies his conservative intellectual views.

Bork was told of his ascension to the post of acting attorney general by Elliott Richardson, who up to then had been his boss.

Bork issued no statement and was not available to the press.

He and Richardson both left the Justice Department early in the evening, under cover of darkness, without public comment.

But the atmosphere in the Justice Department was described by one observer

as "something like a funeral home."

In discussing the Solicitor General's job after his appointment earlier this year, Bork told one interviewer: "In some respects, I'm the government's hired gun.

"I'd enforce a policy even though I might disagree with it."

It was not known, whether he agreed with Nixon's decision to fire Cox—but he carried out his instructions immediately.

The White House did not indicate last night what the President's plans may be for naming a new attorney general.

Any new selection by the President, however, would be certain to face tough going before Congress because of yesterday's events.

Bork, 46, would probably be shot down almost immediately by Democratic Liberals in Congress because of his conservative views.

He has favored anti-busing legislation, charged that student militants are a threat to society and been unsympathetic to anti-monopoly campaigns.