

Long-Range 'Benefits' of Watergate

The president of the American Bar Association yesterday said the Watergate scandals may have "the same long range, and beneficial impact" as the U.S. Civil War.

"It's traumatic now," Chesterfield Smith said. "But think of it in the long range. People I've talked to are beginning to believe that the law is going to get persons at the highest levels of government out of there."

In a freewheeling discussion with about 90 students at Hastings College of the Law, the 56-year-old attorney said that in the past six months, the Watergate investigations have shifted away from the news media "to the system of justice."

Smith said he was "very, very proud of (U.S. District Judge John J.) Sirica" for the part he has played in the Watergate investigations.

"And what Sirica's proved, and all the others — Jaworski, Cox and Richardson — is that we can survive. We have withstood this tremendous assault on the Constitution and shown that it is living."

In reply to several students' questions about future public trust in the legal profession, Smith said, "there's been a temporary adverse impact against" lawyers.

"The ones involved in Watergate believed in their cause," he said, "but, you know, there are about 80,000 lawyers working for the government and under the laws of probability there are a lot more than Mitchell, Dean, Liddy, Grogh and Hunt, that haven't ben caught."

The Lakeland, Fla., law-



CHESTERFIELD SMITH
ABA president

ver scored President Nixon for his alleged role in "possibly offering the FBI director's job" to Pentagon Papers Judge Matthew Byrne Jr. nearly a year ago.

Byrne, a U.S. District judge in Los Angeles, disclosed last May that he had met twice with former Nixon aide John Erlichman during the trial of Daniel Ellsberg to talk about the job.

But Smith didn't think the President should be disbarred while in office.

"You have to wait until he's out. And you know he has to either resign, get impeached or his term will expire."