

Finch Places Blame

Los Angeles

Robert Finch, former presidential adviser and secretary of health, education and welfare, says that today he "couldn't run for dog-catcher without it turning into a referendum on Watergate."

He blamed former presidential advisers H. R. Haldeman and John Ehrlichman, among others, for the problems of Watergate, but said President Nixon, his friend of 25 years, must bear part of the responsibility.

"The President's not without blame" for Watergate, Finch said in a recent interview. "After all, in the final analysis, the President came down in support of their — Haldeman, Ehrlichman and others — control of the staff, as against listening to me or somebody else."



AP Wirephoto

ROBERT FINCH 'They kept me out'

Finch, a former California lieutenant governor, resigned his White House post shortly after the 1972 elections. "Haldeman and Ehrlichman were running the show, and they pretty much kept me out of the decision stream."

Finch had little but scorn for many of the presidential aides and campaign officials. "They had a bunch of

, amateurs in there. Those guys had never run any campaigns."

John N. Mitchell, who resigned as attorney general to head Mr. Nixon's 1972 re-election campaign, "had never run any campaign," Finch said. "We had a group of young bucks in there and they were great on option papers and computers, but very little visceral politics."

Finch said it didn't look like a good year for Republican candidates and that he would have been forced to shun or even criticize the President.

"Nixon is my friend," he said, "and even though we've had disagreements . . . I'm not going to turn my back totally on him."

Associated Press