

# Watergate Embitters Finch

LOS ANGELES, March 25 (AP)—Robert Finch, former presidential adviser and Secretary of Health, Education and Welfare, says that today he "couldn't run for dogcatcher without it turning into a referendum on Watergate."

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

"The President's not without blame" for Watergate, Finch said in an 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."

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



**ROBERT H. FINCH**  
... scores 'amateurs'

of the decision stream," he said.

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 managed Mr. Nixon's unsuccessful presidential bid in 1960 and former Sen. George Murphy's winning 1964 senatorial campaign. In 1958, Mr. Nixon said Finch had "the best political brains I have ever known."

Finch, who had been mentioned as a possible candidate for governor or senator this year, announced two months ago that he would not seek any office, preferring to continue his corporate law practice here.

He 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."