

# Ehrlichman Downgrades FBI

WE LEARN from John Ehrlichman's testimony before a Senate subcommittee on drug enforcement that the Nixon White House considered that its public stance on narcotics offered a "very sexy" political opportunity. Richard Nixon had come in strong on the law and order issue. Ehrlichman says that after his election he wanted to get involved in drug-busting drives and in the organization of drug enforcement for its "political mileage."

It is probably not surprising to hear this from the former President's No. 2 man. But it is surprising to learn that Ehrlichman has no use now for the FBI.

"Before we demand that the FBI get involved (in drug enforcement) we ought to question whether any good can come from it, indeed whether it's any good at anything," Ehrlichman told the subcommittee.

**CONSIDERING HOW MUCH USE** the Haldeman-Ehrlichman White House staff tried to make of the FBI in the Watergate days, this reflects a wholly inadequate measure of gratitude.

Watergate history buffs will recall that the FBI's director at the time, L. Patrick Gray III, visited the White House 11 days after the Watergate break-in and obediently accepted from Ehrlichman and John W. Dean two folders containing the incriminating papers of Howard Hunt. He was told these "should never see the light of day," and they didn't.

It was of course FBI director Gray to whom Ehrlichman was referring when in March 1973 he said to Dean, in perhaps his most famous taped statement: "Let him hang there...Let him twist slowly, slowly in the wind."

**POSSIBLY THE FBI'S** performance in the Watergate affair was not all the example of integrity that the American people were entitled to hope for. But what more could Ehrlichman have asked of it in compliance with his own and Nixon's purposes and desires?