

Cox Probes Spending on Nixon Homes

Washington

Special Watergate prosecutor Archibald Cox has opened a preliminary inquiry into the purchase and improvements on President Nixon's San Clemente and Key Biscayne homes, it was learned yesterday.

A major focus of the inquiry is believed to be the source of funds for the \$4.5 million San Clemente purchase. In addition, Cox's office has asked the General Services Administration to provide information on \$1.3 million in GSA-financed improvements on the two estates.

One of the key questions to be answered, according to a source familiar with the inquiry, is whether any Republican campaign funds or money provided by unions or corporations was used to help the Nixons purchase their California home.

Exercising the broad mandate given him by Attorney General Elliot L. Richardson, Cox also has begun investigating Mr. Nixon's commutation in December, 1971, of the prison sentence of former Teamsters boss James R. Hoffa.

CONDUCT

Cox's responsibility encompasses all allegations of improper conduct that could possibly bear upon Watergate — including any misuse of campaign funds or any undue pressures that might have been exerted to obtain contributions.

Several former Nixon administration figures prominent in the Watergate affair supported Hoffa's bid for executive clemency.

They include John N. Mitchell, who served as attorney general; John D. Ehrlichman, presidential assistant for domestic affairs; John W. Dean III, White House counsel; and Charles W. Colson, special counsel to the President.

Following his release, Hoffa supported the President's re-election and later the 2-million-member Teamsters union endorsed Mr. Nixon. It was the first time the union had endorsed a GOP presidential candidate.

Early this year Colson left the White House to practice law in Washington. The union promptly transferred its \$100,000-a-year legal busi-

ness to Colson's firm.

From Page 1

ness to Colson's firm. It was learned that the FBI questioned Dean about the circumstances of Hoffa's commutation before Dean's Senate testimony last week.

Cox's office is also allegedly reported to be probing contributions to the President's re-election campaign by persons in the Las Vegas area who received loans from the Teamsters pension fund. Some union officials allegedly pressured loan recipients into contributing to the campaign.

Mr. Nixon's San Clemente property transactions attracted the attention of Cox's staff because of the White House's reluctance to disclose all details, despite repeated press inquiries, and because of the role played by Herbert W. Kalmbach, who raised money for the Watergate defendants.

As Mr. Nixon's personal attorney, Kalmbach handled the purchase of the San Clemente estate in 1969. It was not until May 25 that the White House announced Mr. Nixon had borrowed \$625,000 from an industrialist friend, Robert M. Abplanalp, to help finance the purchase.

No mention of the loan was contained in Mr. Nixon's pre-election financial statement of Sept. 16, 1972, which was a compilation of assets and liabilities.

Los Angeles Times