

\$2,000 Helms Fine Paid By CIA Ex-Employees

Post 11/16/77
Former CIA Director Richard Helms, fined \$2,000 for not being truthful with a Senate committee, will be able to pay the debt with money collected from retired Central Intelligence Agency employees.

More than 400 retired CIA workers, meeting after Helms was sentenced Friday, put two wastebaskets atop a piano and tossed in checks and money to pay the former spy chief's fine. When Helms appeared at their scheduled meeting at Kenwood Country Club in Bethesda, he got a standing ovation.

It wasn't known how much money was collected, but one member said: "The baskets were filling up fast when I left. I think it is safe to say there was more than enough contributed to pay the \$2,000 fine."

Other CIA and retired CIA employees said they contributed for weeks to a defense fund to help defray Helms' costs.

In addition to the fine, Helms also

got a two-year suspended sentence after pleading no contest to two counts of failing to fully answer questions put to him during 1973 Senate hearings.

The Justice Department and Helms said government secrets would have come out and national security would have been jeopardized if Helms had gone to trial on the charges.

He said his oath of secrecy to the CIA prevented him from making a full disclosure to Congress about spy activities that led to the downfall of Chile's elected socialist government and the death of President Salvador Allende in a Sept. 11, 1973, military coup.

"You can pick up any book on Western civilization and find this same defense," U.S. District Court Judge Barrington D. Parker, who sentenced Helms, said in an interview yesterday.

"At the Nuremberg trials, we had that thread running through there, and more recently in the Watergate trials," the judge said. At war crime trials in Nuremberg, Germany, after World War II, Nazis frequently claimed they were only doing their duty.

Parker, who criticized the plea bargaining between the government and Helms, said he did not accept Helms' argument that his CIA secrecy oath kept him from honoring his obligation to tell the truth to the Senate committee, and said other government officials must not use national security interests as an excuse to escape from testifying.

"Their obligation isn't to an agency or to sweep something under a rug that they think shouldn't be disclosed," Parker said. "Their obligation is to the Constitution."

Parker said he was certain the United States had not seen the last effort of a government official to condone his actions by saying he was working in the interests of national security.