

VIP

\$26,937:

The

Cost of

Security

At the

Rebozo

House

By Maxine Cheshire

When the White House announced last week that Charles G. (Bebe) Rebozo had sold his house in Bethesda, a spokesman said that he plans to "reimburse the government" for all improvements made to the property while Julie and David Eisenhower were living there.

The bill comes to \$26,937. The figure includes nearly \$17,000 in electrical work.

Anticipating that the \$17,000 figure for electrical work on a three-bedroom rambler might seem out of line, the GSA prepared a "justification" report two months ago.

The money was spent for "low level and high level security lighting, receptacles for portable lighting, light at command post, disconnect and relocate dryer to provide command post area in former laundry room, (underground) conduits for perimeter security system, change and heavy up service to provide separate metering service for Secret Service wiring, new electric panel in command post, fire alarm system."

The cost was high, the report states, because it was done in a hurry to allow the young Eisenhowers to move in as soon as possible after the house was purchased in February, 1973. To meet that deadline, GSA said, "quite a bit of work was . . . performed on pre-minum time."

In addition to the electrical work, the GSA also spent \$4,511 to renovate a former laundry room to provide a command post and bathroom for the Secret Service. Another \$1,836 was spent to "install new shrubbery to conceal security devices and replace lawn damaged by contractor and government.

It also cost another \$395 to replace a sprinkler system damaged while underground conduits were being laid for the electrical work.

Rebozo paid \$127,000 for the white brick house, which is located at 7000 Armat Drive in a prestigious

neighborhood near Burning Tree Country Club. Situated on an acre lot, with a swimming pool, the house was snapped up in 10 minutes by the first couple that looked at it.

The selling price was not disclosed, but one source close to the sale put the figure "around \$175,000."

Rebozo does not want the settlement date published, one realtor said, because he is concerned that "souvenir hunters will be out there digging up the azaleas the minute they hear the Secret Service is gone."

It is expected that Congressional pressure will be brought on the GSA and GAO to get Rebozo to make his promised repayment of federal funds as promptly as possible after the sale is finalized.

Senate Watergate Committee investigators are also expected to watch the sale with interest. They have already subpoenaed all records of the transaction when Rebozo bought the house, including the check with which he made his \$52,000 down payment.

President Nixon loaned Rebozo \$10,000 toward the purchase of the house.

Meanwhile, the Eisenhowers have caused something of a minor flap over the speed with which they found a duplex apartment in the rent-controlled and highly desirable Columbia Plaza.

There is a waiting list of at least a year for that complex of buildings across from the Watergate. People who have been in line longer than the Eisenhowers have been calling the resident manager, Patricia Matthews, to complain that the President's daughter and son-in-law were jumped ahead of everyone else.

"I simply tell them it was "a high-level management decision and made above my head," Miss Matthews said last week.

One of the owners of Columbia Plaza is Kingdon Gould, the PMI parking lot tycoon who was a Nixon contributor and former Ambassador to Luxembourg.