

Public Paid for Nixon's Heat System

By Jack Anderson

When President Nixon was renovating his old Spanish villa in San Clemente into a magnificent seaside home, he quietly dipped into the public till for \$13,500 to buy a new heating system.

The work was done at the same time laborers were busily converting an adjacent Coast Guard station into a government office complex to serve as the Western White House and installing security equipment around the area.

So no one noticed that the General Services Administration, the government's supply arm, also took care of the installation of electric heat in the private 10-room manor and its guest house.

The renovation was apparently supervised by Herbert Kalmbach, the President's personal lawyer, who will not discuss it. Through his secretary, he cited the attorney-client privilege as his reason.

Heated Argument

William Robinson, the GSA official who signed the contract for the job, claims he can't remember it, although he recalls the contracts for the construction of the office complex.

The Secret Service, however, was ready with an imaginative explanation. "The heating system," said a spokesman, "was changed as a result of our suggestion that it be changed."

"We considered the former

system to be in such condition that it was a threat to the President's security.

"You wouldn't want the President of the United States to be living in a house where the heating system could cause a fire, would you?" the Secret Service man asked plaintively.

He would not say, however, what was wrong with the old system that made it such a hazard or even what kind of system it was.

Footnote: No one we contacted had a reason why the President, whose salary is \$200,000-a-year and whose net worth has been rocketing upward since he took office, was unwilling to pay for the heating system himself.

Army Crime

The Army has ballyhooed Fort Carson in Colorado Springs as its showcase for enlightened Army attitudes.

It was at Fort Carson that the Army first eliminated make-work projects, civilized KP duty and allowed Army-style Woodstock rock concerts.

But far from a bastion of enlightenment, Fort Carson has become—according to two men who enforce the law there—"a haven for criminal actions."

A blistering internal memorandum, prepared by two members of Fort Carson's military police, states boldly that Fort Carson's top brass have declared "a policeman's holiday in opening its gates to those with criminal intent."

"Unit commanders at all levels of command at Fort Carson have demonstrated repeatedly a high degree of reluctance in administering punishment to individuals within their command who commit crimes . . .

"The current system of meting out punishments for the more serious crimes, i.e. aggravated assault, armed robbery and possession/use of dangerous drugs (as well as marijuana), has been rendered ineffective."

The six-page "information paper" was prepared by two young MP lieutenants, Michael G. Kelly and Robert Werner, who had become fed up with the Army's reluctance to punish criminals.

The two MPs voluntarily undertook the study, which was finally submitted to the post's provost marshal. The MPs spent more than 100 working hours apiece, checking blotter entries, interviewing unit commanders and going through the files in 14 of the post's legal offices.

Of 206 arrests recorded at Fort Carson during May and June of this year, the lieutenants reported, 82 per cent went unpunished. No case, says the study, received maximum punishment. The alleged crimes ranged from moving traffic violations to armed robbery. More than a third of the arrests involved drugs: 75 booked but only 17 punished.

Why were commanders apathetic about crime? The MPs

cite several reasons. Commanders, they say, "fear alienating their troops and are too close to some of their men to be impartial and fair in disciplining them."

The MPs quote one commander admitting: "Although I just put a man in the stockade for possession of marijuana, if my chief clerk were charged with the same act, I'd be hard-pressed to take any action because I know him so well."

In addition, the MPs claim that commanders are often unfamiliar with the facts in the case. "Somewhere in the distribution chain, police information is pirated in an effort to shield the guilty from the CO. Several times in our discussions with commanders, a unit commander would intimate that he had never been informed that a certain case even existed."

Concluded the MPs: "Well-meaning as they may be, commanders are still unprofessional jurists."

At the Pentagon, the Army verified the authenticity of the MP study but claimed the blotter entries in the study failed to describe precisely the alleged crimes. Army installations prefer to emphasize prevention rather than punishment of crime, said a spokesman. We also spoke to one of the authors of the study, Lt. Werner, a West Point graduate, who declared: "I am willing to stake my career on these findings."