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Nixon Committee Returns \$655,000 to 3 Big Donors

Robert Allen, Texas Oilman, Confirms It Was His \$89,000 That Ended Up With Barker, a Watergate Defendant

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WASHINGTON, March 9—President Nixon's re-election committee said today that it had returned \$655,000 to three big contributors, including \$100,000 to Robert H. Allen, the Texas oilman. Mr. Allen was the source of \$89,000 that passed through a Mexican bank to the leader of an alleged political espionage operation against the Democratic party headquarters here last June.

The committee also announced that it had returned a \$305,000 note to Walter T. Duncan, a financially troubled Texas land speculator who had borrowed money for large contributions to the Nixon campaign and earlier to the unsuccessful nomination drive of Senator Hubert H. Humphrey of Minnesota, a Democrat.

Further, the committee confirmed the return of \$250,000 to Robert L. Vesco, a principal defendant in the Securities and Exchange Commission's investigation of the alleged plundering of Ios, Ltd., and a subsidiary mutual fund.

Even after the return of this

money, the re-election campaign committee reported, it had \$4.7-million on hand at the end of February, including \$246,000 in new contributions made since the beginning of this year.

Letters made public by the re-election committee today indicated that Nixon campaign lawyers had taken the initiative in returning Mr. Vesco's money, but that Mr. Allen and Mr. Duncan had asked for theirs—Mr. Allen for "personal reasons" and Mr. Duncan because of his financial problems.

Mr. Duncan said, however, that he would make "major contributions to Republican candidates in 1974 and 1976 if I am able to recover my financial situation to my satisfaction by that time."

The letter from Mr. Allen, president of the Gulf Resources and Chemical Company, to Maurice H. Stans, finance chairman of the Nixon campaign, confirmed that it was Mr. Allen's \$89,000 that had ended up

Continued on Page 14, Column 4

Continued From Page 1, Col. 7

in the hands of Bernard L. Barker, one of four Miami men who pleaded guilty to breaking into the Democrats' Watergate offices here.

But Mr. Allen insisted that he would not have given the money if he had known how it would be used. He said that his gift had been routed through Mexico for reasons of "convenience" and "privacy"—not, as has been charged, to rid the money of traces to other sources.

Mr. Allen told Mr. Stans that because he made his contribution on April 5, 1972—two days before the new Federal disclosure law effect—"I felt, and still do, that under the law I had every right to expect and enjoy the right of privacy and full anonymity."

"It was for this reason, as well as convenience, that I arranged to have the contribution delivered from Mexico," he said. "I realize that this resulted in some embarrassment to you and the committee, in that the press made preposterous and bizarre assumptions concerning the purpose of this procedure. In actual fact, your committee did not participate in that arrangement in any way."

Mr. Allen did not explain why he had requested the refund.

Mr. Duncan was an obscure real estate dealer in Bryan, Tex., before he gave \$300,000 to the Humphrey campaign last May and June and instantly became the largest recorded contributor in the 1972 campaign.

It was later discovered that he had borrowed heavily for the Nixon and Humphrey contributions but had concealed large outstanding obligations from the banks that lent him the campaign money. Since then, he has been through foreclosure on several large tracts of land in Texas for failure to pay notes. He faces trial in July on a \$2.2-million suit by an insurance company over another Texas land deal.