

Republican Mystery...

For a Government dedicated to law and order, the Nixon Administration gets itself involved in some remarkable difficulties. For many weeks earlier this year, the story unfolded before the Senate Judiciary Committee of how the International Telephone & Telegraph Corp. promised \$400,000 to help finance the Republican National Convention and how officials in the White House and the Justice Department went through some extraordinary maneuvers to arrange an anti-trust supplement favorable to I.T.T.

That affair had scarcely died away before the Watergate scandal began to break. In June, five men were arrested for breaking into the Democratic National Committee offices in the Watergate Hotel in Washington. They had in their possession electronic "bugging" and eavesdropping equipment, cameras and \$5,300 in \$100 bills with consecutive serial numbers.

Former Attorney General John N. Mitchell, then chairman of the Committee to Re-elect the President, promptly denied through a spokesman that there was any connection between the arrested interlopers and the Nixon campaign organization or the White House staff.

Then one of the men arrested turned out to be the Nixon committee's security coordinator. Federal and state investigators next learned that a sixth man—E. Howard Hunt—was involved. He had worked until March 29 as a consultant for Presidential assistant Charles Colson, who handles sensitive political assignments for the White House. Mr. Hunt has disappeared.

The money has now been traced. It turns out to be part of \$114,000 which found its way from the Nixon headquarters to the Miami bank account of Bernard L. Barker, one of the five men arrested at the Watergate. Most of this money was funneled through a middleman in Mexico City. Former Secretary of Commerce Maurice Stans, the chief money raiser for the Nixon campaign, continues to insist that he has no idea of how this money passed from the committee to Mr. Barker. But the attorney for the Nixon Finance Committee refused to answer the F.B.I.'s questions and was fired. Then the treasurer of the committee resigned. Mr. Mitchell has also resigned, though everyone denies any link to the Watergate episode.

Clark MacGregor, the President's new campaign manager, said last month that he had satisfied himself that the Watergate affair "was not known to or sanctioned by anyone in senior status." But Mr. MacGregor has never explained how he satisfied himself on this question.

It seems curious indeed that all these officials of the Committee to Re-elect the President were involved and all this money was being passed about without Mr. Mitchell or Mr. Stans having any idea what was going on. A messy kind of political espionage was being practiced. The public cannot be satisfied with bland assurances. All those involved have to be brought to light and held accountable.