

Finance Committee Fined \$8,000

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The Finance Committee to Re-Elect the President pleaded no contest yesterday in U.S. District Court to eight violations of the elections financing law and was fined \$8,000.

It was the first time that a campaign committee had been found guilty since nonfiling of financial reports first became an offense under the Corrupt Practices Act of 1925.

By entering a plea yesterday, the finance committee avoided having to account for how it spent the unreported money or to respond to any evidence presented by the Justice Department.

"I've never seen the difference between a nolo contendere (no contest) plea and a guilty plea," said U.S. District Judge George L. Hart Jr., in

fining the committee the maximum of \$1,000 on each count. No individuals were charged in the complaint, so a possible one-year jail term was not applicable.

The charges were the first to be brought under the Federal Elections Campaign Act, which took effect April 7, 1972, and cited cash financial payments through the committee's treasurer, Hugh W. Sloan Jr., to its legal adviser, G. Gordon Liddy.

Liddy is a defendant in the Watergate trial. Testimony has indicated that he received more than \$232,000 from the committee for various assignments.

The complaint charged specifically that Sloan gave \$12,-

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000 to Liddy on two different occasions in May and June 1972, without obtaining receipts or keeping required records on the purposes for which the money was spent.

Also listed in the complaint is \$5,300 given to Liddy after May 10 by Herbert L. Porter, scheduling director of the committee. Porter has testified in the Watergate trial that he gave Liddy a total of \$35,000.

Another account also accuses Liddy with failing to report spending an additional \$2,000.

When the Justice Department filed the criminal complaints two weeks ago, a finance committee spokesman said that the complaints "allegedly refers to technical and unintentional failures to comply with certain sections of a complex new law. It is the policy of this committee to fully comply with all election laws. We have always sought to do so."