

Nixon Committee Pleads Innocent in Funds Case

By Lawrence Feinberg 5/12/73
Washington Post Staff Writer

The Nixon re-election committee yesterday pleaded not guilty to charges that it violated campaign disclosure laws by concealing a \$200,000 contribution from financier Robert L. Vesco.

It was this donation, consisting of 2,000 \$100 bills, that resulted in indictments Thursday against former Attorney General John N. Mitchell and former Commerce Secretary Maurice Stans.

In U. S. District Court here yesterday, Kenneth W. Parkinson, a lawyer for the Finance Committee to Re-elect the President, said the group has no dispute with a report by the General Accounting Office that the money was delivered to Stans, then chairman of the finance committee, on April 10, 1972.

Parkinson contended that the contribution did not have to be reported because it was pledged by Vesco on March 8 and thus was not covered by the new disclosure law, which went into effect on April 7.

Judge George L. Hart gave Parkinson two weeks to file a motion asking that the charges be dismissed.

He gave Justice Department attorneys two weeks after that to file an answer.

The maximum penalty on the three-count criminal information of violating the disclosure law is \$3,000. The charges say the finance committee acted through Stans and its treasurer Hugh P. Sloan Jr. in concealing the Vesco contribution, but neither man was named as a defendant.

In a similar case in January the Justice Department accused the finance committee of eight criminal violations of the election financing law. The committee pleaded no contest to those charges and was fined \$8,000 on Jan. 26.

In the New York indictments, Mitchell and Stans were charged with obtaining the \$200,000 contribution from Vesco in return for promises that they would arrange meetings for the financier and his lawyers with officials of the Securities and Exchange Commission, which was investigating Vesco.

The New York indictments also charge that Mitchell and Stans lied to a grand jury about their roles in the contribution.