

# U.S. Asks Conviction Of Nixon Finance Unit

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The Justice Department yesterday asked a federal judge to "let the word ring out clearly" that the Federal Elections Campaign Act will be enforced by convicting the Nixon re-election campaign committee of concealing at \$200,000 cash contribution from financier Robert L. Vesco.

The government's position was stated in reply to a brief filed two weeks ago by the Finance Committee to Re-Elect the President in which that group pleaded not guilty to the charge. A hearing on the charge is scheduled Wednesday.

"To this first challenge to the 1971 Federal Election Campaign Act, this court should respond with vigor and firmness . . . that Congress in enacting it intended that the era of reporting loopholes be finally and forever put to rest," the government said yesterday.

The Nixon campaign unit contends that the funds from Vesco were pledged prior to April 7, 1972, the effective date of the new campaign financing law, and therefore were legal. In addition, the committee said it was acting on the "good faith reliance of its coun-

sel," G. Gordon Liddy, that the handling of the donations was legal. Liddy was later convicted in the Watergate burglary and bugging case.

In yesterday's lengthy brief, the government discounted both defenses. The new law is clear, the government argued, that promises of contributions as well as actual contributions must be reported.

As for the Liddy defense, the government said that he was not a "disinterested counsel" approached by the Republicans, and that in any event he had not been given a "complete and accurate statement" of the facts surrounding the Vesco contribution when he made his oral opinion.

The Vesco donation, consisting of 2,000 \$100 bills, resulted in the indictments in New York last month of former Attorney General John N. Mitchell and former Commerce Secretary and chief Nixon fund-raiser Maurice Stans. They were charged with perjury and obstructing justice in connection with an investigation of Vesco's financial empire.