

Cost to Taxpayers of
2 Other 'White Houses'

Tax-Paid Bill Near \$2 Million

Nixon's Calif., Florida Homes

By William O'Brien

Taxpayer-financed improvements at President Nixon's homes at San Clemente and in Florida have cost nearly \$2 million, the General Services Administration revealed here and in Washington, D.C.

Fix-up projects at the San Clemente retreat have cost \$703,367 since July, 1969—a total of \$280,000 above any press speculation about what the Western White House has cost the government.

First Time

In Washington, the GSA listed for the first time the federal expenditures for improvements, equipment, operation and maintenance of the White House complex at Key Biscayne—\$1,180,522 since the fiscal year beginning July, 1968. This figure includes official office space; the San Clemente figure does not include White House office space.

It was just a month ago that the White House said that federal funds for San Clemente were a modest \$39,000.

The White House also revealed that businessman Robert Abplanalp, who helped President Nixon buy the San Clemente estate, has been getting some money back in the form of rent associated with Nixon's complex at Key Biscayne.

No Bidding

Thomas Hannon, regional administrator of the GSA in San Francisco, conceded that many of the purchases and projects for San Cle-

mente had never been subject to competitive bids.

The "urgency" of the situation dictated "negotiated" purchase of many improvements, according to Hannon. He said he was not able to differentiate the competitive from the negotiated purchases in the 19-page audit report of San Clemente spending.

Items in the San Clemente audit ranged from \$130,530 for a "security and communications system" to \$2.50 for a padlock. Also were

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\$76,000 for "repair and replacement of landscaping and sprinklers damaged in construction work" and \$32,000 for roof tiles on the estate's three gazebos.

A flagpole was installed at \$1853 and it was painted for \$476.

The majority of the items, including \$8810 for removal of weeds in 1970, seemed to be costs normally borne by a home owner.

The government, however, said the expenses at both San Clemente and Key Biscayne were all related to "security."

Few of the expenditures at San Clemente, apart from those dealing directly with security and \$4834 for furnishing the presidential office, would be considered candidates for tax exemption.

Disclosure of the government spending at San Clemente was made here by Hannon, flanked by four ranking officials of his staff, including the regional counsel "to answer legal questions."

The disclosure was not made sooner, Hannon claimed, because no one had asked for it before.

Besides, he said, the audit for the expenditures since the purchase of the Presidential estate in 1969 had just been completed and authorization for its release had just been approved by Arthur Sampson, now awaiting Senate confirmation of his appointment as GSA commissioner.

There was prompt denial

the recurring report that the San Francisco GSA office provided bath soap at \$6 a bar for the Nixon home.

"We don't provide any personal items," said Ernest Garbarino, the GSA official in charge of the San Clemente refurbishing.

It was learned, however, that a local, highly placed GSA official was given a mock plaque bearing "his" and "her" soap bars prior to his departure for San Clemente to take part in the audit.

Landscaping improvements were a recurrent theme in the audit explanation. Pruning of trees cost \$1950 in 1972, removal of weeds was itemized at \$1100 in 1971, relocation of a tree was billed at \$1800 in 1970, and \$5387 was paid to Kenneth Kammeyer for "design and installation of landscaping to provide proper security" in 1970.

Greatest volume of expenditures was in 1970, immediately after Presidential acquisition of the estate. During that period \$613,999 was spent.

Of that \$403,415 was allocated for a redwood "security" fence, a blockwall "security" enclosure, paving, repair of a six-inch water

line, electric heating system, repairs of a roadway, installation of a beach cabana as a security post and safety crossing over the shoreline railroad track.

The "in-house design and construction costs" for GSA in supervising the long list of 1970 improvements was tabbed at \$42,612.

Expenditures for succeeding years declined to \$77,529 in 1971, \$4288 in 1972 and \$7549 this year. The most recent item was classified solely to "GSA design and inspection charges."

The audit also provided a peek into the Presidential office, which has a "lamp, brass, desk, \$72; lamp, wood, table, \$79; desk, leather top, \$472; chair, swivel, \$141; sofa (recovered) \$504" and other items to a total of \$4834.

The Key Biscayne audit included \$3303 in fiscal 1970 for gold-painted golf carts for the Secret Service patrol.

Two years later there appeared another item of \$5230 for Secret Service carts at

Key Biscayne.

Included in the Key Biscayne figures was \$161,463—or \$2691 a month—for renting two houses in the complex for the Secret Service and White House communications staff.

The White House said one of the houses is owned by Abplanalp, the other is held in the name of Edwin H. Underwood, trustee for the Indiana National Bank, Indianapolis.

Abplanalp, a Bronxville, N.Y., businessman, who made a fortune perfecting the valve that operates aerosol spray cans, lent Nixon \$625,000 in 1969 to help him buy the original 28.9 acre San Clemente property for \$1.5 million.

In 1970 Abplanalp bought 23 of these acres back from Nixon for \$1.25 million, canceling the loan and leaving Nixon with 5.9 acres, the house, the enjoyment of the other 23 acres, and an investment of his own of \$251,000.

The White House said the Nixons themselves paid for \$123,514 in improvements, making their net investment \$374,514.

From these figures, the breakdown of who has what investment in the San Clemente retreat is as follows:

- The Nixons: \$374,000.
- Abplanalp: \$1.25 million.