

'Deactivating' President Nixon



Jack Anderson

Much more detailed column,
WXPost same date, filed Watergate.

RICHARD NIXON had \$33.35 left over, according to a confidential audit, from the \$100,000 that Congress granted him to cover his transition expenses. He managed to stay within the allotment, however, only because the government generously didn't charge him for the big expenses.

For instance, the taxpayers were stuck with \$265,580 in salaries for 54 federal employees who continued to work at the San Clemente compound. Among those whose salaries weren't charged to Mr. Nixon, as we previously reported, were his personal butler, maid, three chauffeurs and a medical corpsman.

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IN ADDITION, eight Navy mess stewards worked at San Clemente during Mr. Nixon's adjustment to civilian status. The General Accounting Office, which conducted the confidential audit, offered this justification: "They were used primarily to dismantle the kitchen equipment," which had been installed for Mr. Nixon while he was President.

Mr. Nixon also should have paid rent for his office space at an annual rate of \$77,470. But under the law, the General Services Administration could waive the rent. He was granted such a waiver last August.

Of course, Congress never expected the Nixons to pay the annual \$622,000 cost of their Secret Service protection out of the transition budget. The GAO also decided that the government communica-

tions staff assigned to Mr. Nixon shouldn't be counted as a transition expense.

A separate, confidential report, prepared for House Government Operations chairman Jack Brooks (Dem-Tex.), discloses that it cost the taxpayers \$118,076.93 to "deactivate" the Nixon compound at Key Biscayne, Fla.

This didn't include \$1780 spent to improve Mr. Nixon's heating system, \$738.95 for wiring improvements, \$1520 for sod and \$2000 to prevent beach erosion. Mr. Nixon was also bequeathed, courtesy of the taxpayers, storm shutters worth \$1081.20, a \$390.18 privacy screen and a \$119.75 Sears washing machine.

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AN ADDITIONAL \$124,041.36 was spent for the "disposal by demolition" of a security building that Mr. Nixon no longer wanted on his Florida property.

As part of the deactivation, the government spent \$10,800 to remove bulletproof glass and replace it with plate glass windows, \$6604.57 to remove a screening hedge and \$15,950 to restore the walls around the compound.

From all the Nixon property, the government now has in its warehouses \$128,708 worth of bulletproof glass, a \$65,770 security fence, a \$314 seawall ladder, a \$125.95 boat trailer and assorted items of furniture running into the thousands.

(Written with Les Whitten)