

Cost of Ousting Nixon

WXPPost filed W/gate

**Jack Anderson**

GOVERNMENT auditors are still trying to calculate exactly how much of the taxpayers' money was spent to remove Richard Nixon from the White House and to install him at San Clemente as a presidential pensioner.

The latest confidential General Accounting Office audit, which attempted to straighten out all the gifts the taxpayers have given to Nixon, was completed appropriately on Christmas Eve. Here are some of the highlights:

- The federal paymasters had to do some fancy financial juggling before they could start paying Nixon his \$5000 monthly pension. They had no authorized funds, for example, until Congress belatedly voted a separate pension for Nixon. In the meantime, they made the initial payments from pension funds that had been earmarked for the widows of Presidents Harry Truman, Dwight Eisenhower and Lyndon Johnson.

- Before Nixon's tapes and documents became tied up in litigation, the General Services Administration assigned 37 archivists and laborers to sift through his papers. This cost the taxpayers an estimated \$102,000.

- The deposed President completed the transition to civilian status, according to the bookkeepers, on Feb. 9, 1975. He then was given a \$45,000 budget to last him until the end of the fiscal year on June 30. According to the confidential audit, he used \$35,000 to pay the salaries of four assistants.

He spent \$7200 for telephone and travel expenses. The rest went for supplies and equipment rental.

- Nixon's transition budget, which expired on February 9, was a flat \$100,000. Of this, a startling \$52,815.95 was spent on stationery, another \$12,000 for postage. Apparently, he will have need for all that stationery. He has been snowed under with more than two million unanswered letters.

- The former President was never charged for \$265,580 in salaries paid to 54 federal workers who were "detailed" to him at first. Among them were his personal maid, butler; three chauffeurs and a medical corpsman. It cost the taxpayers \$2600, for example, to pay seven movers and packers to haul the Nixon's personal belongings out of the White House.

★ ★ ★

NIXON also should have paid \$77,470 in rent for his oceanside office space. But GSA waived the rent last August.

Of course, Nixon is entitled under the law to the Secret Service protection. This runs the taxpayers \$622,000 a year.

Footnote: The confidential report suggests that GSA at first was concerned that Nixon might not legally be entitled to any funds at all. But "the Justice Department determined that . . . former President Nixon . . . was entitled to the benefits provided by (two separate) acts."