

Patman Hits Nixon for 'Secrecy' in Bug Probe

WASHINGTON — UPI) — Facing four empty chairs, Rep. Wright Patman (D-Tex.) charged today President Nixon had "pulled down an iron curtain of secrecy" and refused to allow

aides to testify at a House hearing about alleged Republican spying on Democrats.

Patman had asked Clark MacGregor, Nixon's campaign chairman; the finance

chairman of the President's re-election effort, Maurice Stans; former Attorney General John Mitchell, and a White House aide, John Dean, to testify at a session of the House Banking Committee which he heads. All refused.

Only one Republican was present as Patman called the hearing to order on the Watergate bugging case. A quorum was missing, so Patman was blocked from seeking to subpoena the four missing men.

Positions Chairs

Patman positioned four chairs, with MacGregor's Stans', Mitchell's and Dean's names on large placards, in the center of the committee room and called out the names one by one.

"If any of these people are here, let them speak up," Patman said.

When there was no response — as he knew there would not be — Patman asserted that Nixon was "responsible for those four empty chairs."

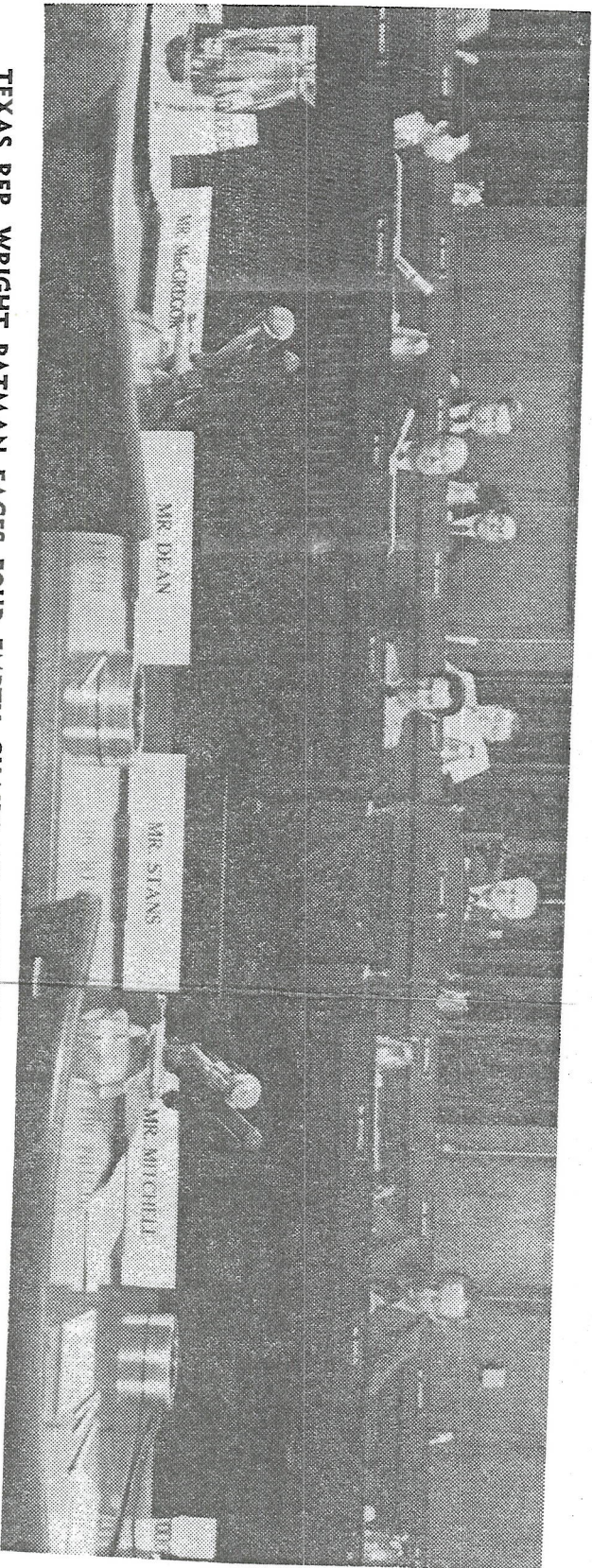
"President Nixon is responsible for this secrecy — for the elimination of the people's right to know," he said.

'Iron Curtain'

"President Nixon has pulled down an iron curtain of secrecy to keep the American people from knowing the facts. It is the kind of secrecy — rigidly enforced — which no one dreamed would be possible in a democracy."

Patman subsequently adjourned the meeting.

The only Republican member of the committee on hand was Minnesota Rep. Bill Frenzel, who apparently came only to read a statement accusing Patman of not allowing Republicans a chance to be heard in previous hearings and not keeping Republicans informed of the progress of his investigation.



TEXAS REP. WRIGHT PATMAN FACES FOUR EMPTY CHAIRS AT SCHEDULED HEARING ON GOP SPY CHARGES
Banking Committee chairman charged President Nixon refused to allow aides to testify before the panel

—UPI Photo