

G.O.P. FUND DINNER HURT BY SCANDAL

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Ticket Sales Raise \$750,000
Against Goal of \$2-Million
for Washington Event

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WASHINGTON, May 9 — Republican leaders, already perturbed by the potential political impact of the Watergate case were confronted tonight with tangible evidence that the scandal had hurt their party.

Gathering at the Washington Hilton for a \$1,000-a-plate banquet, party leaders were told that receipts for the evening had reached only \$750,000 — half the average total for similar fund-raising events in recent years and far below the stated goal of \$2-million.

Nixon Extends Time

Buel Berentson, director of the Senate Republican Campaign Committee, one of the sponsors of the dinner, said that last-minute receipts might push the total close to \$800,000.

Another official of the inner, which is also sponsored by the Republican National Committee and the House Republican Campaign Committee, commented privately: "Three months ago we had a President re-elected by a record majority, and we thought we were going to rake the money in. Now all we have is Watergate, and we're hurting."

Shortly before the dinner began, the White House disclosed that President Nixon, who had been scheduled to make an informal, 10-minute speech, had asked for more time. The inner was also opened to coverage by television networks.

Among the prominent ab-

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G.O.P. Fund Dinner in Capital Hampered by Watergate Affair

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sentees was Senator Barry Goldwater, the Arizona Republican, who said several weeks ago that the dinner should be postponed or canceled and returned his ticket. His press spokesman, Tony Smith, said that the Senator was at West Point tonight for a ceremony honoring General of the Army Omar N. Bardley.

Referring to Watergate, Mr. Goldwater had said "I've been receiving letters and calls from Republican friends of mine all around the country and they are saying, 'No more money to the Republican National Committee until this is cleared up.'"

Ticket sales may have been hampered by the new campaign funding law, which closed a loophole that had enabled contributors to District of Columbia fund-raisers to avoid identification. The huge fund surplus held by the Committee for the re-election of the President also may have deterred sales.

Party leaders, whose relationships with the White House staff and the re-election committee were never cordial, are particularly bitter that activities of Presidential aides have cast them and the party into disrepute.

Their antagonism showed through a letter sent out two weeks ago over the signatures

of George Bush, the party chairman, Senator Bill Brock of Tennessee, chairman of the Senate committee, and Representative Robert H. Michel of Illinois, chairman of the House committee.

Independence Stressed

"At no time," the letter said, "has the Republican National Committee or its financial arm, the Republican National Finance Committee, or the Congressional or Senatorial committees, been accused of any wrongdoing in their political activities or handling of campaign funds last year.

"But the fact remains that many of our supporters identify these committees as part and parcel of what they are reading in the papers. This is very unfortunate, because the 'Watergate Affair' has had an effect on our fund-raising."

Two of the three men honored at the dinner were forced out of their party posts recently by the Nixon Administration.

Vice President Agnew presented the awards, which went to Senator Robert Dole of Kansas, the party chairman last year; Senator Peter H. Dominick of Colorado, the Senate committee chairman last year, and Representative Bob Wilson of California, the House committee chairman last year.

Mr. Dole was asked for his resignation and Mr. Wilson was pressed to quit.