## emocrats Reject GOP Pro

By Jules Witcover Washington Post Staff Writer

Democrats suing the Nixon re-election committee for \$6.4 million in the Watergate break-in and bugging have rejected a new offer to settle for \$600,000, but have indicated they are willing to make a deal for about twice as much.

Negotiations resumed late December and the offer was made on Jan. 9 in the office of Kenneth W. Parkinson, lawyer for the Republican de-Washington fendants, The Post learned yesterday.

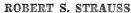
Several days later, the offer war turned down by all five major plaintiffs—the Demo-National Committee, cratic Robert S. Strauss and Lawerence F. O'Brien, its present and past chairmen; the Democratic State Chairman's Association and Spencer Oliver, the official whose phone was tap-

Participants in the talks said that lawyers for the Democrats told Parkinson that the Committee alone wanted \$1.25 million, and that the other plaintiffs had not decided on any figure. Since then, they said, the Republicans have made no additional offer.

Strauss yesterday confirmed both the \$600,000 offer and the Democrats' rejection, and the fact that the Democrats have decided the time has come to make a deal if the price is right. Parkinson and Leon Knauer, lawyer for the Fi-nance Committee for the Reelection of the President, another defendant, declined comment.

The \$600,000 is only \$75,000 than the Repulicans were said to have offered to settle the suit last April. National said the







SPENCER OLIVER

... Democratic chairman and phone tap target

than \$200,000 on legal fees any share of the settlement. concerning the suit since the Committee needs more money last offer. He said he and to settle now, he said, because

now because it has spent more O'Brien were willing to waive The Democrats are willing

## posal of \$600,000 to Settle Suit

suits-to bring out the facts in the Watergate case through committee was briefed on the publicity from the suit alone Boston for a midnight conferthe taking of depositions—has offer at a closed meeting here was worth much more than ence with leaders of the state been served by other fact-finding groups.

"Our first objective was to try to light a fire under the whole Watergate break-in investigation," Strauss said. "It was the only real discovery going forward for a period of

"We substantially completed our discovery process and the process has gone on by the courts, the Senate Select Committee, the grand jury and the special prosecu-

Strauss said he has received a consensus of support for out-of-court settlement from members of the executive committee of the national committee from governors, members of

cratic leaders. The executive crats. They argued that the to charter a plane and fly to on Jan. 11, he said.

Both the Republicans and the Democrats agreed, participants of the negotiations said, that continuation of the suits would only result in needlessly escalating legal costs. Also, they said, indictments in the Watergate case would halt the civil suits until criminal charges had been resolved, a process that could last two years or more.

When he first disclosed last to the Republicans about a settlement, Strauss came under chose.

a major purpose of filing the Congress and other Demo-fire from some fellow Demoany out-of-court deal could chairmen's group on the night bring, and that the suit was a after the meeting in Parkin-vital tool in uncovering evivital tool in uncovering evidence in the Watergate affair. suaded him. Strauss subsequently said he would not settle then.

Among Strauss' critics then and now has been Oliver. Oliver charged yester-day that Strauss had tried to get the state chairman's association, for which Oliver worked, to join the national committee in a settlement and April that he had been talking leave Oliver to carry on the le-

He said Strauss had offered office, but

Strauss acknowledged yesterday that he had offered to go to Boston to see them when they could not accept his invitation to come to Washington to be briefed on the negotiations. Oliver said neither he nor the state chairmen's leaders knew of the talks with the Republicans' lawyers Parkinson invited their lawgal fight on his own if he still yers to attend the Jan. 9 meeting.