

Plans to Pay Costs Of Acquitted Aides

The Washington Star-News

WASHINGTON, March 13 — President Nixon's 1972 campaign committee, reversing an earlier policy, plans to reimburse former officials for ex-criminal cases if they are acquitted.

The new policy could save the two highest officials in Mr. Nixon's re-election campaign — John N. Mitchell, former Attorney General, and Maurice H. Stans, former Secretary of Commerce—hundreds of thousands of dollars if they are found not guilty of Federal charges of conspiracy, perjury and obstruction of justice.

Last June, the committee declared that it intended only to "pay legal fees and costs in connection with matters which are not the subject of formal criminal charges." At that time, the committee said it would have been improper to use campaign contributions to finance a legal defense against criminal charges.

But the campaign organization has now substantially modified that policy. It now says that it will reimburse "all such fair and reasonable legal expenses" to any former Nixon campaign official if he is indicted and then "found not guilty of a felony."

The revised policy is contained in a legal document executed on Feb. 11, eight days before Mr. Mitchell and Mr. Stans went on trial in United States District Court in New York. One co-signer of that document is Mr. Stans, acting in his capacity as chairman of the Finance Committee to Re-elect the President.

The document is a "declaration of trust" that abolished the Finance Committee as a legal entity and established a new organization, the 1972 Campaign Liquidation Trust, to oversee the final distribution of the more than \$3.5-million remaining from the 1972 Nixon campaign.