

Mitchell, Stans Called Fine Men by Nixon Aide

New York

The prosecution put Rose Mary Woods, President Nixon's personal secretary, on the witness stand in the Mitchell-Stans trial yesterday and she promptly told the jury that each defendant was "a fine man."

Miss Woods' testimony was also a mixed blessing in other ways, as far as the prosecution was concerned. She was called as a witness to show that a list of contributors to President Nixon's re-election campaign — sent by Maurice Stans to the White House — did not include the name of Robert L. Vesco.

This was to support a contention by the prosecution that John N. Mitchell, the former attorney general, and Stans, former secretary of commerce, were attempting to hide the fact of Vesco's contribution. It was \$200,000 in cash, which was described as the largest cash contribution to the campaign.

Mitchell and Stans are accused of perjury, conspiracy and obstruction of justice for allegedly attempting to impede a Securities and Exchange Commission investigation of Vesco's financial affairs in return for the contribution. Vesco, who was also indicted, has fled the country.

During cross-examination, the defense succeeded in in-

roducing into evidence a second list — of the very largest contributors — that was also sent to the White House, and on it was Vesco's name. It was circled and had a question mark after it — the only name with such a marking — but it was there, tending to lend some credence to the defense's contention.

This list was sent to the White House by Stans on Nov. 29, 1972, Miss Woods testified. This was two days after the S.E.C. formally started its investigation of Vesco's affairs.

The first list was of contributors who had given to the campaign before April 7, 1972. On that date a new law went into effect requiring that subsequent contributors be listed, and any list turned over to the General Accounting Office.

Before that date, campaign contributions could be kept private. The defense has been contending that Vesco's \$200,000 contribution to Stans was handled by Stans in a routine manner, and that even though there was no legal obligation to make it public, there was no attempt to cover it up.

Miss Woods was preceded

on the stand by Hugh W. Sloan Jr., who had been treasurer of the finance committee to re-elect the president which was headed by Stans.

He testified that he had recorded Vesco's contribution under the initials "J.M.," for John Mitchell, on the orders of Stans, who told him to keep it listed that way "for the time being." Miss Woods was not asked later if the Vesco contribution was on her list under the initials "J.M."

New York Times