

Jury Didn't Believe

New York

The forewoman of the jury that acquitted John N. Mitchell and Maurice H. Stans said yesterday the jurors doubted the truthfulness of John W. Dean III, a key government witness at the criminal conspiracy trial of the former cabinet members.

Sybil Kurcharski, 21, a Westchester county bank teller, said she and the other jurors were convinced Mitchell and Stans told the truth when they took the witness stand in their own defense at their 48-day federal trial.

Dean's credibility came into question when he admitted he had pleaded guilty to a charge of obstruction of justice in the Watergate scandal in hope of drawing a lighter sentence, Miss Kurcharski said on NBC's "Today" show.

(Vice President Gerald R. Ford said in a statement issued by his Washington office that the jury verdict in the Mitchell - Stans case "says to me that John Dean's credibility has been severely eroded.")

Ousted by President Nixon as White House counsel, Dean is expected to testify for the government at other trials spawned by the 1972 Watergate break-in and subsequent coverup attempt. He also is regarded as major

witness should President Nixon be impeached and tried.

Mitchell, 60, the former attorney general, and Stans, 66, one time commerce secretary, were accused of perjury and conspiring to impede a Securities and Exchange Commission investigation of financier Robert L. Vesco's financial empire in return for a secret \$200,000 Vesco contribution to President Nixon's 1972 re-election campaign.

Miss Kurcharski said the jury in its 26 hours of deliberations paid only scant attention to what was seen as a key element of the government's case against Stans and Mitchell — that Mitchell made 19 calls to Dean in an attempt to hinder the SEC's Vesco investigation.

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John Dean

"They made a big thing of it," said Miss Kurcharski, a Democrat who voted for George McGovern for president in 1972. "We didn't make it a big thing."

What did impress the jurors, according to Miss Kurcharski, was the fact that Dean had previously pleaded guilty in the Watergate case and that "if he was guilty he might not be telling the truth."

"We took this into consideration," she said. "He hoped this would help him. We just had a feeling he was not telling the truth."

On the other hand, there was no question among the jurors about the testimony of Mitchell and Stans, who left the Nixon administration in early 1972 to run and raise funds for the President's re-election campaign. Miss Kurcharski said the jurors felt the two officials "were just doing their jobs."

"Mr. Mitchell, he answered all the questions, and he appeared to be telling the truth," she said. "The same for Stans."

In Washington, Julie Nixon Eisenhower said that

Dean lied about Mr. Nixon and that is what the Watergate matter is all about.

She said that Dean's "character has not been improved" by the acquittal of Stans and Mitchell.

When asked if that comment meant she was saying that Dean had lied in his accusations about the Watergate cover-up and the President's role, Mr. Nixon's 25-year-old daughter said heatedly: "Of course, he's lying about my father — that's what this is all about. He's the only witness who has accused my father of anything."

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