

18 January 1973

[The 6 p.m. newscast, after carrying a routine report of the day's developments (or lack thereof) in the Watergate trial, continued with several unrelated stories and then carried the following item -- apparently received separately from the main Watergate story:]

Rep. Edith Green, Democrat from Oregon, said in Washington today that the Office of Education approved a costly extension of a project directed by E. Howard Hunt Jr. on June 21st, the day after he was linked to the Watergate break-in. Hunt, who has pleaded guilty to all charges brought against him as a result of the Watergate affair, was working as a \$100 a day consultant to the White House at the same time he was serving as vice-president of Robert Mullen & Co., a Washington public relations firm. He was also project director for the Office of Education contract. The \$738,000 contract was awarded without competitive bidding, as are 90 per cent of Office of Education contracts. However a "sole-source [phonetic] board" was created to examine each proposal and determine whether it should be open to bids. Ms. Green said that in this instance the sole-source board ignored its own rules by not requiring a proposal for continuing the contract. It was also not deterred by a government audit raising questions about the performance of the contractor. Ms. Green said that the participants in the sole-source meeting on June 21st told her that Hunt's connection with the Watergate incident and his role as project director was discussed.

She said, in her words, "it was suggested that approval of this sole-source contract could prove to be an embarrassment to the administration." Nevertheless, the continuing contract was funded. She added: "We can presume that Hunt and Mullen's influence at the White House made it imperative that this Mullen contract be continued on a sole-source basis for another year." The Mullen contract is entitled, "Proposal for More Effective Help from the Federal Government in Assisting Handicapped Children to Become National Assets."

-----