

World of Politics

A Lot of Silence On the 'Real Issues'



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Washington

THE PRESIDENT'S campaign manager, Clark MacGregor, attacked George McGovern for talking about everything but what the public is most interested in.

By the time he finished his National Press Club appearance last week, the same could have been said of him.

The Democratic nominee, MacGregor said, is "desperately seeking to focus attention on some other issue, any other issue than the one the American people most want to hear about — the famous McGovern welfare scheme."

But what MacGregor's audience wanted to hear most about was another welfare scheme — the one that seems to benefit only one man, a participant in the famous Water Gate raid on the Democratic Headquarters. And MacGregor couldn't tell them a thing about it except that it wasn't the real issue.

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MacGREGOR was bugged by six questions in a row about the money that keeps turning up in the bank account of Bernard Barker, a member in the botched raid that was supposed to result in the bugging of the Democratic Headquarters.

MacGregor could explain everything else that came up — the war, the economy and the bombing of the dikes. But he couldn't explain how all that money floated through the Committee for the Re-election of the President and came to rest in Barker's bank.

He was first asked about a \$25,000 check that was discovered early last week. He said he was "satisfied" that the check had been given to Barker, who

cached it and then gave the cash to the committee, which was "properly and lawfully" spent for campaign purposes.

Then he was asked about \$89,000 that had surfaced just before he spoke, from the committee to Barker's account.

MacGregor shook his head. He had been in San Francisco, Dallas and Los Angeles. He had come back to Washington at 7 in the morning. Besides, he said, as if the saving thought had just struck him, he was concerned about the "rights of individuals involved" and a number of ongoing investigations.

"I believe deeply in the civil libertarian concepts," he concluded stoutly.

Democrats are inclined to agree with MacGregor's characterization of the break-in as "idiotic" and "bizarre." He claims it was "absolutely unauthorized," which is, of course, the big sticking point.

Maurice Stans will not talk. So people are free to speculate that the \$114,000 is the going rate for such a bungled bugging raid, or for silence about one.

What else is there to think?

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MONEY started out strong as a big issue in this campaign, but it didn't last. George McGovern, although not required to, set the pace by publishing in March a full list of his contributors.

Since April 7, when it became mandatory, Richard Nixon has been reporting his take. But he flatly refuses to divulge the sources of the \$10 million in cash he had on hand when the funds disclosure law went into effect. He will be under increasing pressure to do so. His resistance to telling the public what he does not consider its business—which is almost everything—is well known.

Arthur Hoppe is on vacation