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Questions on the Estates
Unsettled by Statement

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WASHINGTON, Dec. 8—President Nixon, in today's statement on his personal finances, said he hoped to dispel "the myth" that improvements on his private estate at San Clemente, Calif., paid for by the Government, "have vastly enriched me personally."

However, Mr. Nixon's statement left unanswered most of the questions raised during recent Congressional investigations into Federal spending on his private estates. It also sets up and assails some "myths" that have not been widely mentioned in the media or by Congress.

Mr. Nixon dismissed as "grossly inaccurate" reports that "anywhere from \$6-million to \$10-million" had been spent on improvements to "my home" at San Clemente. The true total spending was \$68,000, the statement asserted.

This amount, he said, was spent almost entirely on safety and security systems and on an electric heating system (which cost over \$13,000) "that the Secret Service thought necessary for safety purposes."

\$6-Million for Complex

Mr. Nixon then noted that the G.S.A. had spent about \$635,000 on "the grounds surrounding my home" and said that this had been for security lighting, walls and guard posts and for landscaping that was "torn up" when the protective devices were installed.

"By comparison," the President went on, the military spent about \$6-million to construct and maintain "the Western White House complex"—a

Coast Guard station adjacent to his property that the President uses as an office.

Mr. Nixon complained that it had been ignored that he and his wife had spent \$187,977 of their own money for "real improvements" on the home.

The President's explanation of the facts involved in Federal spending on his private estate could, in the view of observers here, add to rather than reduce public confusion in the issue.

For example, Mr. Nixon assailed the "perception that is widespread" that the Government had spent \$6-million to \$10-million on his home in San Clemente.

Although Mr. Nixon may be correct in his reference to spending on San Clemente, his statement does not make any reference to spending at Key Biscayne. And Government agencies themselves have reported that more than \$10-million was spent at the two places in the name of Presidential security and safety and for assistance to the President.

A G.S.A. report issued earlier this year indicates that in addition to the San Clemente expenditures the agency spent \$137,482.13 at the President's home in Key Biscayne; \$315,226.12 on the President's grounds there and \$727,814.39 on administrative support from Jan. 1, 1969, through June 30, 1973. The G.S.A. also reported an expenditure of \$16,000 on Grand Cay Island, the Bahamas, owned by the President's friend, Robert Abplanalp.

By separating government spending on the grounds from spending on the actual house



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Robert H. Abplanalp, "a good friend," lent the Nixons \$450,000 in 1969 to finance down payment to the San Clemente land.

at San Clemente, Mr. Nixon seemed to be suggesting that only spending on the house added to the value of the property.

But testimony at the House hearings indicated that many of the decisions for spending public funds on the grounds at San Clemente had been made on the basis of aesthetics. On a number of occasions these decisions—and purchases—were made by Mr. Nixon's personal lawyer or architect, who then forwarded the bill to the Government for payment.

Included in spending on the grounds for alleged "security" were \$11,000 for a Redwood fence built after the Secret Service had requested a plain wire mesh fence for security and several thousand dollars for Mexican lanterns designed by the President's architect