

Blank Checks From Hughes to Nixon Fund Alleged

WASHINGTON, Jan. 9 (UPI) —An agent of Howard R. Hughes gave signed blank checks to President Nixon's re-election campaign committee, according to sworn testimony released today.

Sally Harmony, who was a secretary to G. Gordon Liddy, a convicted Watergate conspirator, said in a sworn deposition that she had filled in the amounts payable on the blank checks, but that she could not remember how much money was involved.

[The total involved was \$100,000, The New York Times reported last Oct. 22. Quoting qualified sources, The Times said at that time that the \$100,000 had been given in checks backed by funds of Mr. Hughes for the Nixon re-election campaign.]

A spokesman for Common Cause, the citizens' lobby that won a lawsuit for full disclosure of President Nixon's campaign contributors, said its



Associated Press

Sally Harmony

records showed that Mr. Hughes, the reclusive billionaire, had given \$50,000 to the Nixon campaign through an agent in Washington.

The contribution was in ad-

dition to \$100,000 that another Hughes aide gave to Mr. Nixon's close friend Charles G. Rebozo. Mr. Rebozo has told investigators that he kept that cash contribution in a safe deposit box for three years before returning it.

Mrs. Harmony, in the deposition, said that the checks she handled had been signed by Robert Bennett, a Washington-based publicist for Mr. Hughes. The address for Mr. Hughes in the Common Cause records was the same as Mr. Bennett's concern, Robert R. Mullens and Company.

Mr. Bennett, who is the son of Senator Wallace F. Bennett, Republican of Utah, said in an interview that the amount of the contribution had been fixed in advance at \$50,000 and that the use of blank checks to pay for it was strictly a clerical matter.

Mrs. Harmony made the deposition last April 27 in a civil

suit filed by the Democratic National Committee against the Republicans for damages incurred by the June 17, 1972, break-in and bugging of the party's headquarters in the Watergate complex here. The part dealing with the blank checks had been ordered sealed.

Federal District Court Judge Charles R. Richey ordered the testimony opened on a request from the St. Louis Post-Dispatch, which ran a copyrighted story on the matter today. In a brief order, Judge Richey said that the "public's right to know" mandated that the deposition no longer remain sealed.