

Ex-SEC Chief's Testimony

Stans Linked to Vesco Lies

New York

A former government official testified yesterday that Maurice H. Stans once admitted lying to a federal grand jury investigating the activities of financier Robert L. Vesco, and said Stans persuaded him to lie also.

G. Bradford Cook, former chairman of the Securities and Exchange Commission, testified that he twice lied to a grand jury to cover up

Stans' involvement with former Attorney General John N. Mitchell in a secret \$200,000 cash contribution from Vesco to President Nixon's 1972 campaign.

But Cook said that the third time he appeared before the grand jury he came clean after warning Stans, who is the ex-Commerce secretary, that "I'm going to tell it as it was."

Cook's testimony was the

strongest yet in support of the government's charge that Stans engaged in a criminal conspiracy with Mitchell and then tried to cover it up before the grand jury that subsequently indicted the two men on charges of conspiracy, obstruction of justice and perjury in connection with the \$200,000.

Cook testified previously that he toned down a mas-

sive SEC fraud complaint after two meetings with Stans prior to the filing of the commission's lawsuit against Vesco on Nov. 27, 1972.

He said Stans feared that the Vesco contribution to the Nixon campaign would come to light. Stans was finance committee chairman of the re-election effort.

Cook said he was persuaded to lie initially at a meeting with Stans in the White House basement, in which he said Stans admitted his own perjury after saying, "Brad, let's have one of those conversations that never took place."

Cook testified that Stans then told him he had told the grand jury that he had not discussed the Vesco case with Cook before the SEC fraud action against Vesco was filed.

Cook said he looked into his coffee cup and said nothing, and Stans then told him:

"Well, Brad, that's the way it happened and there's no sense getting anybody embarrassed. The gift (the Vesco contribution) was a legal gift."

"I said 'Well, if that's the way it's going to be, that's the way it's going to be,'" Cook testified.

Cook said Stans told him at that meeting that he had told the grand jury that their two meetings prior to the filing of the SEC complaint were for the purpose of arranging a joint trip to Haiti. One of the perjury counts charges that Stans lied when he denied any conversations with Cook regard-

ing Vesco before the SEC complaint was filed.

Cook also said he discussed the Vesco case with Mitchell during a meeting on Dec. 13, 1972, in Mitchell's New York office. Cook said he discussed his desire to become chairman of the SEC, and said Mitchell did not say he would support him.

Instead, he said Mitchell reported that there were complaints about the "tenacity and exuberance" of the SEC staff on some cases.

Cook said he told Mitchell he believed the staff was dedicated, noting that a year and a half of work went into the Vesco case before the suit was filed.

Cook said he discussed with Mitchell a report that the latter had called the U.S. Embassy in Switzerland in Vesco's behalf after Vesco was arrested there on a complaint of a stockholder in Vesco's firm.

Mitchell at first denied making the call, Cook testi-

fied, but added: "Well, anybody would make a telephone call to get an American citizen out of a foreign jail."

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