

# G.A.O. Says Nixon Spent \$382,474 in Legal Defense

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WASHINGTON, May 21 — President Nixon has spent nearly \$400,000 in public funds thus far to defend himself against legal charges arising from the Watergate scandals, according to a detailed estimate prepared by the General Accounting Office.

The G.A.O. report, made public today by Representative Edward R. Roybal, Democrat of California, also shows that nearly half of the \$382,474.07 spent by the White House on Watergate-related matters since July 1, 1972, went to pay lawyers and other employes assigned to the White House from elsewhere in the executive branch.

The report, which covers virtually the entire period since the break-in at the Democratic National Committee's headquarters in the Watergate office and apartment complex on June 17, 1972, brings to about \$6-million the total expended by all Federal agencies involved in the Watergate case.

## Prosecution Costs

The special Watergate prosecution force, which is conducting the criminal investigation of the case, has received \$2.8-million from Congress to finance its work so far. The House Judiciary Committee has received \$1-million in public funds to finance its inquiry into the impeachment of the President, and has asked Congress for \$500,000 more.

The Senate Watergate committee, whose year-long inquiry into the need for new legislation to prevent abuses in future Presidential campaigns is scheduled to end next month, has spent \$1.5-million, and the G.A.O. itself, which has inquired into Federal spending on the President's private homes, has spent \$100,000.

The G.A.O. auditors found that, as of last March 24, 10 lawyers had been hired to assist James D. St. Clair, the special White House counsel who is handling Mr. Nixon's varied legal defenses.

Since July, 1972, about \$163,000 of the estimated \$382,474.07 spent by the White

House on the Watergate case has gone to pay the salaries of attorneys and other persons assigned to the White House from other departments of the executive branch.

The G.A.O. report shows that, as of last March 24, five

of the 10 lawyers under Mr. St. Clair came to the White House from the Department of Justice and the Defense Department, and one from the General Counsel's Office of the Federal Communications Commission. All were paid from the budgets of the agencies from which they were loaned.

In addition, John A. Cahill, a former Justice Department lawyer, and Michael Sterlacci, a former assistant counsel to the United States Information Agency, were placed on the payrolls of the Departments of Agriculture and Transportation, respectively, when they were brought into the White House.

The G.A.O. report notes, however, that neither of the two men has ever worked for the executive department that is paying their salaries.

Asked about the assignment of employes from the executive branch to the White House, Gerald L. Warren, the deputy White House press secretary, cited a section of the United States Code authorizing the practice of bringing "employes of the executive departments and independent establishments . . . from time to time to the White House Office . . ."

## Questions Raised

Staff officials of the Senate Commerce and Appropriations Committees raised questions, however, when told that Loren A. Smith, one of Mr. St. Clair's assistants, had remained on the payroll of the F.C.C. for nearly six months before he was transferred to the regular White House payroll last week.

One Appropriations Committee staff member knowledge-

able about the F.C.C.'s budget said that he could find "nothing in the appropriations language that would allow the use of F.C.C. funds by the White House."

Unless the White House reimbursed the commission for the salary paid to Mr. Smith since last November, the staff member said, "it would certainly seem an illegal use of funds."

But Werner Hartenberger, an administrative assistant to Richard E. Wiley, chairman of the F.C.C., said that no reimbursement had been provided by the White House and none was expected. It was his understanding, he added, "that agencies are not reimbursed. That's standard practice."

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