

Stans Fined \$5,000 in Campaign Case

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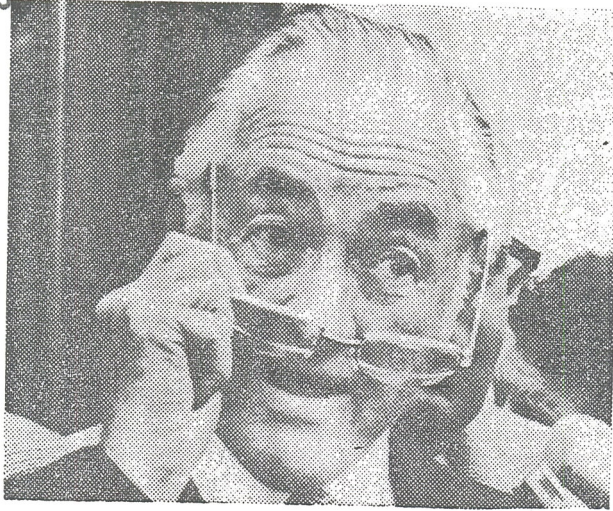
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WASHINGTON, May 14—Former Secretary of Commerce Maurice H. Stans was fined a total of \$5,000 by a Federal district judge today for five admitted misdemeanor violations of Federal campaign laws in Richard M. Nixon's re-election campaign.

Mr. Stans, the chief fund raiser for the 1972 campaign, pleaded guilty to the charges March 12 under an agreement with the Watergate special prosecutor that ended his liability for most but not all other possible violations. He faced a possible maximum term under the arrangement of either two or five years in prison, depending on how the statutes were interpreted.

This morning, in a brief hearing at the United States Courthouse, he pleaded for "understanding and leniency," insisting that he did not "intentionally violate any law."

Judge John Lewis Smith Jr.



Maurice H. Stans leaving court in Washington yesterday

granted the request, saying that, because of a number of factors, including Mr. Stans's "long public and private career," a "monetary penalty" was punishment enough.

Later, outside the court, Mr. Stans said to reporters that Judge Smith's action showed that the court recognized that

his violations of the law had not been intentional.

He contended, too, that he had been "fully exonerated of any improper activities in connection with Watergate and its aftermath," and that with today's proceedings he had

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"vindicated" his plea to the Senate Watergate committee in 1973 to give him back his "good name."

And, in a bitter voice, he said that the day's actions brought to an end three years of a "multitude of investigations, lawsuits and unfounded accusations" that had prevented "any chance of a normal life."

Presumably, among the lawsuits he included his trial—and acquittal—with former Attorney General John N. Mitchell in New York in the case in which he and Mr. Mitchell were accused of impeding a Securities and Exchange Commission investigation of Robert L. Vesco, the financier, in return for a secret contribution to Mr. Nixon's campaign.

Mr. Stans was the third member of the Nixon Cabinet to be sentenced for crime, after Mr. Mitchell and former Attorney General Richard G. Kleindienst.

Mr. Mitchell was convicted in the Watergate cover-up trial of conspiracy, obstruction of justice and various counts of lying under oath and was sentenced to 30 months to eight years. Mr. Kleindienst pleaded

guilty to a misdemeanor charge involving the withholding of information and received a suspended sentence.

A fourth member of the Cabinet, former Treasury Secretary John B. Connally, was acquitted of bribery charges.

The five misdemeanors for which Mr. Stans was sentenced today—with a \$1,000 fine for each—included two counts of "nonwillful" acceptance of illegal corporate campaign contributions.

There were also three counts of failing to make accurate reports of transactions to the treasurer of the Nixon finance committee, and thus causing the committee to fail to make the required reports to the General Accounting Office.

Although the written charges did not say so, some of the violations involved money that figure figured in the Watergate affair, as shown by testimony at the Watergate cover-up trial regarding hush money paid to the Watergate burglars.

The precise meaning of the term "nonwillful" regarding the

campaign contributions is unclear. The statute covering such contributions is not clear as to the extent of knowledge required to prove a violation.

At the hearing in which Mr. Stans pleaded guilty to the charges, moreover, the prosecutor, Thomas F. McBride, said that one element of proof of the two campaign contribution counts was that Mr. Stans "knew or acted in reckless disregard of the corporate source of the funds."

However, the statute specifies that persons charged with a felony violation of the law are accused of "willful" violations, while the persons charged with misdemeanors are charged with "nonwillful" violations. Plea bargaining generally entails charging a defendant with a lesser offense, and hence many of the negotiated pleas arranged by the prosecution in campaign contribution cases have involved the "nonwillful" violation.

At the hearing today, Judge Smith explained his sentence by citing a number of factors,

including the nature of the charges as "nonwillful."

He said that there were four main purposes in sentencing—rehabilitation, deterrence, protection of the community and punishment.

Rehabilitation was "not a factor" in Mr. Stans's case, he said. "Public safety is not a matter of concern," either, he went on, in that the crimes did not involve violence. As for deterrence, he said that the prosecutions in campaign cases had provided sufficient deterrence.

The remaining question was punishment. Judge Smith said that he had reviewed the nature of the charges, Mr. Stans's career, the "many letters" sent to the court on Mr. Stans's behalf and his "personal situation."

"The court finds," he said, "that the ends of justice and the public interest are best served by a monetary penalty."

Just before the hearing on Mr. Stans, Judge Smith had another proceeding involving discussion of a possible sen-

tence for three young men who were pleading guilty in a case involving armed robbery in the theft of meat. The judge asked one of the three if he understood what sentence he could get for the crime.

"Life," the young man replied, correctly.

Mr. Stans was sitting at the defense table awaiting his own turn before the judge. He watched, with no sign of emotion.

Kleindienst Accused

WASHINGTON, May 14 (UPI)—The District of Columbia Bar Association has asked that Mr. Kleindienst's license to practice law be suspended.

The association said that statements made to a Senate committee by the former Attorney General were untrue and constituted "conduct prejudicial to the administration of justice."

The recommendation by the bar's disciplinary committee was received today by the Court of Appeals, which has 90 days to decide the matter.