

Former Official Says Gurney Protested Inquiry on His Aide

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TAMPA, Fla., May 29—A former Under Secretary of the Department of Housing and Urban Development testified today that in 1971 Senator Edward J. Gurney angrily complained to him about an investigation of "a member of his staff."

The former official, Richard C. Van Dusen, now a lawyer in Detroit, said that Mr. Gurney had told him he intended to talk to Attorney General John N. Mitchell about the investigation of Larry E. Williams of Orlando, a fund raiser.

Mr. Van Dusen's testimony came as a five-man prosecution team began the final stages of its presentation at the three-month-old trial in United States District Court of Mr. Gurney and four others on charges stemming from a campaign fund-raising operation.

From 1969 to 1972, Mr. Van Dusen was the No. 2 man to George Romney, who was then secretary of H.U.D. He said that Mr. Gurney, a former member of the Senate Watergate committee, called, and "he expressed considerable indignation that the department would have called the F.B.I. to investigate a member of his staff without notifying him first."

'Anger and Distress'

"The Senator expressed anger and distress," he said. "I advised the Senator that we had no choice but to investigate it. The Senator indicated his intention to talk to Attorney General Mitchell about it."

Mr. Van Dusen's testimony referred to an incident in 1971 in which Mr. Williams allegedly demanded a \$5,000 payment from a builder in exchange for help with a federally subsidized project. Mr. Van Dusen said that his department referred the complaint to the Federal Bureau of Investigation.

In earlier testimony, Mr. Williams said that nothing came of the F.B.I. investigation after Mr. Gurney talked to Mr. Mitchell about it.

Mr. Van Dusen said that Mr. Gurney had referred to Mr. Williams "as occupying some sort of staff capacity . . . he wasn't happy that we were investigating the matter."

The witness said that he had reported Mr. Gurney's call to Mr. Romney and later also talked to Mr. Mitchell about it. Mr. Romney is listed as a possible trial witness, but Mr. Mitchell is not.

In other testimony, a former secretary in Mr. Gurney's Senate office in Washington, Alfhild Michal, said that in October, 1973, she and a staff assistant, George Beal, used a shredding machine to destroy telephone logs kept in the office. She said that the documents had been destroyed at the instruction of Mr. Gurney's administrative assistant, James L. Groot, one of the defendants.

Another former secretary, Patricia Kotler, testified that in the fall of 1971 she overheard Mr. Groot tell Mr. Williams on the telephone that Mr. Gurney "was very grateful to Jim and Larry for doing the dirty work that he couldn't do himself."

Mrs. Kotler said that she later provided information to The Miami Herald about the inner workings of Mr. Gurney's office. "I felt that what I had seen and what was indicated to me was going on or was wrong," she said.