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EX-C.I.A. OFFICIAL TESTIFIES 3 HOURS

Osborne, Former Security Chief, Brings a Lawyer

WASHINGTON, Feb. 17 (AP) — Accompanied by an attorney, Howard J. Osborne, the former security chief for the Central Intelligence Agency, was questioned for more than three hours today by the Rockefeller commission about the agency's domestic surveillance activities.

Mr. Osborn, whose office conducted an operation that William E. Colby, director of Central Intelligence, has said infiltrated agents into American radical groups in the late nineteen-sixties, was the first of the dozen witnesses who have appeared before the panel to be represented by an attorney.

According to knowledgeable sources, an inter-office memo dated Feb. 6, warned agency employees that they might be prosecuted for past practices and advised them to retain private counsel.

Vice President Rockefeller, the commission chairman, indicated that Mr. Osborn had not invoked the Fifth Amendment against self-incrimination.

Mr. Osborn refused all comment to reporters, saying he had "never commented or talked to the press."

His lawyer, John W. Debelius, when asked who was paying his legal fee, replied, "The agency most certainly is not."

Two other former C.I.A. officers, Raymond G. Rocca and N. Scott Miler, also testified before the commission at its sixth weekly meeting. Mr. Rocca and Mr. Miler served under James J. Angleton, the agency's former counterintelligence chief, who last week reportedly told the commission he had been kept in the dark about the activities of a secret unit that Mr. Colby has acknowledged kept files on 10,000 Americans.

The commission operated for most of the day at half-strength, with four of its eight members, including Mr. Rockefeller, absent. The Vice President joined the hearings in midafternoon just as Mr. Osborn was completing his testimony.

Asked for his reaction to a Harris poll indicating that a majority of Americans think the commission will cover up any wrongdoing by the agency, Mr. Rockefeller said, "I can assure anybody that we're not" conducting a whitewash.

For the first time in five weeks, former Gov. Ronald Reagan of California was present for a commission meeting. Mr. Reagan said he had read transcripts of all the sessions he had missed and that he was confident that he had "a grip" on the material.

Mr. Osborn, who headed the office of security from 1964 to 1974, is regarded as a central figure in both the Rockefeller inquiry and past investigations of C.I.A. involvement in Watergate.

= ANSWER TO PREVIOUS BULLETIN

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