

Senator Says Navy Inquiry Is Thwarted

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WASHINGTON, April 30 —

A Congressional investigation into the use of military personnel as "servants" to the President and his staff has been thwarted by the White House, according to a statement released today by Senator William Proxmire.

The Democratic Senator from Wisconsin, a frequent critic of military spending, characterized the White House conduct as a "disgraceful taxpayer ripoff."

The General Accounting Office, which serves as the investigative arm of Congress, has attempted unsuccessfully for seven months to get records from the White House concerning the 60 Navy stewards assigned to the White House.

Flown to California

"My office has received complaints," said Senator Proxmire, "from these stewards alleging intolerably long working hours and noncompensation for serving drinks and food at private parties."

Most of the Navy stewards are assigned to the White House "Mess," a private dining room for top Presidential aides, according to Mr. Proxmire.

Some are flown to the President's private homes in Florida and California or to Camp David, the Presidential retreat

in Maryland, to attend the needs of the President and his staff.

Two men serve Vice President Ford at his home, as they did former Vice President Agnew.

Occasionally, these stewards are called upon to serve food and drinks at private parties in the homes of White House staff members, according to the Senator, who did not identify any of them. Some stewards have told the Senator's staff that they are not paid for this extra work, either in overtime from the Navy or by the Presidential aide who gives the party.

"G.A.O. attempts to gain access to records last October and November were stalled repeatedly by high White House and Pentagon officials, though the G.A.O. made several attempts to carry out the investigation I requested," the Senator said. The G.A.O. then wrote to

Gen. Alexander M. Haig, Jr., the President's assistant, in December, 1973, formally asking for the records. General Haig never replied, Mr. Proxmire said.

"Continuing discussions with various White House personnel produced no further results," he added. The White House refused to let the G.A.O. interview all the stewards involved.

The G.A.O., according to its press spokesman, is taking "a wait and see" attitude for the moment. "We can't go to court," said Roland Sawyer, the spokesman. "We have to persuade" the White House to cooperate, he said, because the agency does not have the authority to demand the records.

General Haig's staff referred all inquiries to J. Fred Buzhardt Jr., the President's chief counsel. Mr. Buzhardt did not respond to numerous telephone calls to his office.