

Secret Service Director Says That Most of \$1.9-Million Spent on Nixon's Homes Was for Security

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WASHINGTON, June 27 — The director of the Secret Service today told a House subcommittee that most of the \$1.9-million in public funds spent on President Nixon's private homes in San Clemente, Calif., and Key Biscayne, Fla., had been requested by his agency to assure the President's security and safety.

Expenditures of \$13,000 on a number of items including a swimming pool cleaning machine, two flagpoles and an ice-making machine were not requested by the Secret Service, James J. Rowley, director of the service, told the House appropriations subcommittee.

However, Arthur J. Sampson, head of the General Services Administration, which contracted and paid for all the expenditures on the Nixon homes, said that the money had been spent in connection with Presidential business or to save additional Government expense.

The subcommittee chairman, Tom Steed, Democrat of Oklahoma, told reporters later that the hearing had been held to "explain to the media" what the money had been spent on and not to press the two agencies for additional information.

"I think we should be spending more, not less, on security for the President," Mr. Steed said. "If Mr. Nixon or Mr. [Leonid I.] Brezhnev had been shot at San Clemente last week, you people would have been asking why we didn't do more to protect them."

Mr. Brezhnev, the Soviet Communist party leader, met

with Mr. Nixon at the Western White House.

Although asked repeatedly by several Democratic Congressmen for a comparison of Government expenditures on President Nixon's homes with those of previous Presidents, Mr. Sampson said that the figures were not available and he said it would be too difficult a project to prepare them.

Questioned later, a Secret Service spokesman, Jack Warner, said that the security preparations at President Nixon's homes had been more extensive than for any past President.

He added, however, that this

was because a law passed by Congress after Robert F. Kennedy was assassinated in 1968 provided for increased security precautions for Presidents and Presidential candidates.

Mr. Warner said that the Secret Service had only asked for certain conditions to be met for Presidential security and did not specify how much money should be spent or what materials should be used.

Asked about a redwood fence costing \$11,561.35 that was put up at San Clemente, Mr. Warner explained that the Secret Service had asked only for a fence of a certain height that would be able to with-

stand certain pressures. He said the agency did not specify the use of redwood or any other particular materials.

Asked about the expenditure of \$20,397 for a new electric heating system at San Clemente, Mr. Warner said that the Secret Service had said only that the old heating system must be changed because it was a fire hazard.

Mr. Warner said that "a security post" at San Clemente, which cost about \$13,000 in public money, could also be used as a beach cabana.

Mr. Rowley and Mr. Sampson and their aides insisted at the hearings today that the

word "improvements" to describe the work done at the Nixon homes was a misnomer because the projects were actually "installations" made for purposes of security.

Haldeman Consulted

Both officials explained that the expenditures were made by the G.S.A. at the request of the Secret Service, not on the orders of the President. However, Mr. Sampson added that the G.S.A. had consulted with the White House staff, particularly the former chief of staff, H. R. Haldeman, when preparing the work at the two residences.

Under questioning, Mr. Samp-

son disclosed that the agency did advertise for bids for most of the work, in accordance with Government requirements aimed at getting lowest bids. The G.S.A. used a clause that provided that the agency could negotiate prices instead of seeking bids if "public exigency" so dictated.

The "public exigency" in the case of San Clemente, Mr. Sampson testified, was that Mr. Nixon wanted to move into San Clemente with his staff 15 days after he became the owner. He said the agency had only 29 days in which to prepare for the President and that meeting the target date would

have been impossible if he had asked contractors to bid.

Among the items that the Secret Service did not request but that were paid for at Government expense were several surveys of the San Clemente property, one of which was made before Mr. Nixon bought the property.

Mr. Rowley and Mr. Sampson indicated that the more than \$100,00 that had been spent on shrubbery, trees, bluegrass sod and fertilizer and maintaining the grounds at San Clemente was for damage done when the security equipment was installed and camouflaged. Several thousand dollars were spent to prune trees, one of the witnesses stated, because falling boughs could endanger the President.

The flagpoles at San Clemente and Key Biscayne were not ordered by the Secret Service but were installed by the G.S.A., at a cost of \$2,916, because the military had requested that their "Commander-in-Chief have a flag to salute," a G.S.A. official said.

The \$1.9-million spent on the President's homes did not include the cost of security equipment or the wages of security guards. Nor did it include the \$400,00 spent on a helicopter pad at Key Biscayne.