

2 Nixon Aides Questioned In Break-in, Fund Furor

Washington

Two close associates of President Nixon answered questions in secrecy yesterday as public controversy continued to swirl around Democratic charges of scandal in the Nixon campaign.

Maurice H. Stans, once Nixon's Commerce Secretary and now his campaign finance director, underwent an "informal" interview by staff aides of the House Banking and Currency Committee, which is looking into charges of mishandling of campaign funds.

Meanwhile, Charles W. Colson, a special counsel to the President, appeared to make a sworn, court-ordered deposition to opposition lawyers in a \$1 million civil suit Democrats have filed over the bugging of their national headquarters.

TONE

The public battle was taken up by top Nixon lieutenants after the President himself set the tone Tuesday by a blanket denial of wrongdoing by his campaign organization or those now in the Administration.

There were these developments:

- Senator Robert J. Dole of Kansas, the GOP national chairman, accused the McGovern presidential campaign of "at least seven serious violations" of a new campaign financing law. The charge triggered the promise of a "thorough" investigation from the same Federal officials who last Saturday reported finding nine "apparent or possible" violations of the law by the Nixon campaign in handling \$350,000 in contributions.

- Attorney General Richard G. Kleindienst, appearing in Rhineland, Wis., promised there would be criminal indictments handed down in the alleged bugging incident before the November election, possibly in September.

- Clark MacGregor, Nixon's campaign chairman, said in Baltimore the indictments would clear Mr. Nixon and his Administration of any involvement.

While the chorus of public denials and countercharges swelled, secret investigations continued into parallel—and perhaps related—cases that began when five men were arrested in the Democratic National Committee offices at the Watergate apartments here June 17 carrying bugging and photographic gear.

REPORT

The General Accounting Office, in releasing its report on Nixon finances last weekend, said it had traced \$114,000 intended for the President's re-election campaign to the Florida bank account of one of the Watergate suspects, Bernard L. Barker.

Stans, who has complained the GAO report was riddled with inaccuracies, met for 90 minutes with staff aides for the Banking and Currency Committee. Sources said the discussion "touched on" how the money wound up in Barker's account, but declined to disclose details at Stans' request.

They also reported the informal interview was interrupted briefly when Stans had to leave the room to take a phone call from Mr. Nixon.

COLSON

Colson, meanwhile, gave a sworn court-ordered deposition to opposition lawyers in a \$1 million suit for damages that Democrats have filed against the Watergate defendants. All depositions are under a seal of secrecy ordered by the Federal District court that will hear the case.

At a Wisconsin news conference, Kleindienst called the Watergate break-in "stupid" and said the FBI is

running "perhaps the most extensive, thorough and comprehensive" investigation of it since the assassination of President Kennedy. He denied charges from McGovern forces that the grand jury empaneled to probe it would hold up indictments until after the election.

United Press