

# O'Brien Sued for Libel

## Washington

President Nixon's chief fund-raiser, Maurice H. Stans, filed a \$5 million libel suit yesterday against Lawrence F. O'Brien, campaign chairman for Senator George S. McGovern.

The action in United States District Court was the latest move in an escalating war of words and writs centering around the June 17 Democratic headquarters bugging and break-in case.

Stans has been drawn into the so-called Watergate Caper because Republican campaign funds turned up in the bank account of one of five men arrested in the break-in.

### ACTS

In his suit, Stans charged that O'Brien "falsely and

maliciously" accused Stans of a number of criminal acts despite the fact that O'Brien knew the accusations were false.

Stans said: "I have brought this action not only to defend my reputation against a vicious and wholly unfounded attack, but to serve notice on Mr. O'Brien and his agents that so long as they persist in the low road of smear and character assassination, they will be held strictly accountable not only to the American people but before the law."

The suit asks \$2 million in compensatory damages and \$3 million in punitive damages.

### WORK

A statement from O'Brien's office said: "It

looks like the Republicans are going to have one diversionary tactic a day to take public attention away from this outrageous act of political espionage against the Democratic party, but it won't work."

It is the third civil suit filed so far in the Watergate affair.

O'Brien first sued the five break-in suspects for \$1 million, and is currently trying to amend the suit to add Stans and several other Republicans as defendants. The Nixon campaign committee and its financial subsidiary sued O'Brien Wednesday for \$2.5 million, charging abuse of the court process in connection with the original O'Brien suit.

Stans' suit was based on the attempt O'Brien made

Monday to amend his original suit.

For technical reasons, the court did not accept the amended O'Brien complaint, though proceedings which could lead to its official filing are pending.

Stans, in his complaint yesterday, said that since the amended O'Brien complaint had not been filed, it "at the time of its publication amounted to nothing more than a press release."

In his suit, Stans said the O'Brien document "falsely and maliciously charges him with and falsely and maliciously accuses him of the crimes of burglary, larceny, espionage and violations of the federal criminal statute relating to electronic surveillance."

*Associated Press*