

GOP Offers Settlement — Would Avoid a Trial

WASHINGTON — (UPI) — President Nixon's campaign organization, apparently anxious to avoid a summer rerun of the Watergate trial, has offered a \$525,000 out-of-court settlement to the Democratic Party for the bugging of its offices last year, sources said today.

If accepted, the report settlement would put the Nixon campaign in the unique and uncomfortable position of helping to underwrite the Democratic multi-million-dollar debt with contributions from GOP faithful.

It would also write an end to the \$5.4 million civil damage suit the Democratic National Committee slapped on

the Committee for the re-election of the President shortly after the Watergate break-in last June 17 before it could come to trial.

The trial was expected to begin June, involving many of the same witnesses from the Nixon campaign who figured in the January criminal trial of the seven men indicted for the Watergate raid.

Spokesmen for both the Democrats and the Nixon committee said late yesterday that negotiations — initiated by Republican lawyers — have been underway for some time toward a possible out-of-court settlement.

"There has been serious discussions between the law-

yers, intensive in the last two weeks," Democratic Chairman Robert Strauss said through a spokesman.

Devan B. Shumway, spokesman for the Nixon campaign, added, "I know there are continuing efforts to settle it before it gets to the court proceeding stage."

Both men declined to discuss money figures, but would not deny the reported \$525,000 offer.

The suit, which also names as defendants the Watergate Seven and several individual Nixon campaign aides, charges invasion of privacy and conspiracy to violate the civil rights of Democratic officials through political espionage.