

His Role in Vesco Case Under Fire

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G. Bradford Cook, chairman of the Securities and Exchange Commission for only 74 days, resigned yesterday following allegations that he had deleted references to a secret \$200,000 contribution to President Nixon's re-election campaign from a commission complain against financier Robert L. Vesco.

The 36-year-old Cook defended his role and the SEC's handling of the Vesca case but said at a news conference, "The web of circumstance that I find myself confronted with has made me feel the effectiveness of the agency might be impaired."

In his one-paragraph letter of resignation to the President, Cook said he deeply regretted resigning, "but in light of the unfortunate circumstances now prevailing, I believe it best to do so." He concluded: "I retain my complete confidence in our country, its institutions and myself."

Cook, who told a reporter only last Friday that he intended to "gut it out" and remain on the job, became the 13th Nixon administration official to resign since late February after the Watergate scandal and disclosures of Nixon re-election campaign activities.

ROLE

Cook's role in the Vesco case was outlined last Thursday by a federal grand jury in New York. The panel indicted two former Nixon cabinet members — John N. Mitchell, former attorney general, and Maurice H.,



AP Wirephoto

G. BRADFORD COOK Changes in testimony

Stans, former secretary of Commerce — Vesco, and Harry L. Sears, former majority leader of the New Jersey Senate. They were charged with conspiracy to defraud the U.S. and to obstruct justice.

Mitchell and Stans, who have denied any wrongdoing, were also charged with perjury.

The indictment alleged that the defendants had conspired to obstruct justice in connection with the SEC's investigation of Vesco, who had given a \$200,000 cash and later another \$50,000 contribution to the Nixon

See Back Page

From Page 1

campaign. The Nixon finance committee, headed by Stans, subsequently returned the money to Vesco.

Cook, who was not named as a defendant, was said to have been persuaded by Stans to delete from the SEC's proposed civil lawsuit against Vesco and others all references to the \$200,000 contribution. The suit subsequently was filed last November 27 in federal district court in New York.

The SEC suit charged Vesco and 41 other defendants with having "spirited" away some \$224 million in cash and securities from four mutual funds.

Cook was questioned about the matter for nearly five hours in closed session of a

Senate Appropriations subcommittee last Monday and his resignation was announced a few minutes before he was to have appeared yesterday before a House Commerce subcommittee.

Senator William Proxmire (Dem-Wis.), chairman of the Senate subcommittee, said Cook had "chosen the right course" in resigning. "He deserves special credit for resigning so promptly before his involvement in recent activities could hurt the effectiveness of the SEC."

Proxmire also said that in

Ex-SEC Chief's Appearance Here Canceled

The Commonwealth Club announced yesterday that G. Bradford Cook's scheduled address at a luncheon meeting tomorrow in the Sheraton Palace Hotel was canceled.

The substitute speaker will be Brian Van Camp, the state's commissioner of corporations, who will speak on "the economy, securities market and public opinion."

view of Cook's testimony last Monday, "I am convinced that there was no way the SEC could continue to provide that (public) trust with Mr. Cook as its chief."

Cook said he discussed his resignation with General Alexander M. Haig Jr., special assistant to the President, but that his resignation was not requested. He said he had resigned voluntarily and Haig had agreed to it.

Cook, who was director of the SEC's division of market regulation and later the commission's general counsel before being sworn in as chairman last March 3, said that former SEC Chairman William J. Casey had "concurred" in his decision to alter the paragraph relating to the contribution in the agency's complaint against Vesco.