



## Some Furious Rich Americans

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**A**T THIS MOMENT, a large number of rich Americans are biting their nails in disappointed fury. They probably number close to two dozen. Because of the Watergate horror, they will not get the ambassadorships they bought and paid for in the 1972 campaign.

The Republican ambassadorial auction this year, mainly conducted by former Secretary of Commerce Maurice Stans, undoubtedly topped all former records in this sordid but customary department of American politics. The new Ambassador to Luxembourg, Ruth Lewis Farkas, gave more than \$200,000 — which is a devil of a lot of money for a small post.

Pre-election bids often had to be raised after the President's reelection. Part of Mrs. Farkas' \$200,000 plus represented raises on her original bid. This was a new feature.

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**M**RS. FARKAS was lucky, because her name went early to the Senate. She got what she paid for after a good deal of senatorial grumbling and rumbling. Her fellow bidders in the auction have been overtaken by events, however. After the drastic shake-up of the President's staff, meetings were held at the White House.

The meetings produced the unanimous decision that deliveries could no longer be made to the successful bidders in the ambassadorial auction. Presumably, the ambassadorships thus left open will mainly go, instead, to the senior professionals of the foreign service.

This is a result that has its comic side. To the disappointment of the successful

bidders, for example, one must add the disappointment of the chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee, Senator J. William Fulbright. He had been looking forward to many a delightful public hearing, with many a Republican money giver writhing on the witness stand.

Yet Fulbright's well-known plans to use the griddle and the cattle-prod have served a highly useful purpose, none the less. The threat of Fulbright, plus the post-Watergate climate, positively forced abandonment of the old system of dealing with American Embassies abroad as though they were expensive merchandise.

This is a change long overdue; and it should be made permanent.

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**B**Y THE SAME TOKEN, it may be hoped that one good result of the Watergate horror will be a serious effort to deal with the whole ugly problem of campaign contributions and campaign financing.

In fact, the problem of campaign financing only begins in presidential elections. It ends in the Senate and House of Representatives. A substantial majority of members of both Senate and House are politically mortgaged, because of their dependence on campaign money from business, or from labor, or from other pressure groups.

There is only one way to clean up the mess. Public financing and publicly provided television time for all campaigns for federal office, all supervised by a bipartisan electoral commission, constitute the only way.