

Judge Rules Stans Can Testify

New York

Former Commerce Secretary Maurice Stans can testify at the Senate Watergate hearings without violating a court order that bars public discussion of his indictment on charges of perjury and obstructing justice, a federal judge ruled yesterday.

"I find nothing in the rule to prohibit such testimony before a legislative committee," Judge Lee Gagliardi said.

Stans and former Attorney General John N. Mitchell were indicted May 10 on charges of conspiracy in an alleged scheme to influence a federal investigation of New Jersey financier Robert Vesco's secret \$200,000 contribution to President Nixon re-election campaign last year.

Vesco, who has fled the country, and his attorney, former New Jersey state senate majority leader Harry W. Sears, also were indicted.

Stans and Mitchell were also charged with perjury.

Judge Gagliardi has scheduled September 11 for the start of the trial of Mitchell, Stans and Sears.

Samuel Dash, the Senate committee counsel, said Thursday that he felt an appearance by Stans would be acceptable because the panel intends to ask about matters other than the Vesco case or Stans' solicitation of a \$200,000 cash contribution from Vesco.

Dash said Mitchell has raised no objection to appearing "and indicated that he very much wants to testify." Mitchell's testimony is not yet scheduled.

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