



The New York Times/Mike Lien

Maurice H. Stans, former G.O.P. fund raiser, waits as lawyers confer at Senate hearing. Lawyers are Donald G. Sanders, center, of Senate panel; Robert W. Barker, left, and Walter J. Bonner, for Mr. Stans.

Stans, Reluctant Witness Who Only Raised Funds

By JAMES M. NAUGHTON

Special to The New York Times

WASHINGTON, June 12—He didn't sign checks. He didn't hand out cash. He didn't keep detailed financial records. All he really did, Maurice H. Stans told the Senate's Watergate committee today, was raise money, about \$50-million of it.

The former Secretary of Commerce and chairman of the Finance Committee to Re-elect the President appeared, under oath and under duress, to testify reluctantly—yet, he insisted, earnestly—to the Senate Select Committee on Presidential Campaign Activities.

His appearance in the Caucus Room of the Old Senate Office Building caused a momentary stir. The whole room buzzed when David M. Dorsen, the committee's assistant counsel, announced Mr. Stans as the next witness. A policeman swung open the tall oak door of the hearing room. Every head turned toward it and in came David Murray, a reporter for The Chicago Sun-Times.

Testifies After Delay

It was several minutes before Mr. Stans entered the doorway and several hours—after a legal skirmish between his lawyer, Robert W. Barker, and the committee, plus a lunch recess—before the highest-ranking Nixon campaign official yet to appear at the brown-draped witness table began his testimony. But the burden of Mr. Stans's evidence was that he had no evidence.

"I had no knowledge of the Watergate break-in or any other espionage efforts before I read about them in the press, or of the effort to cover up after the event," Mr. Stans emphasized. "I had no knowledge of any sabotage program to disrupt the campaign to the best of my knowledge, there were no intentional violations of the laws relating to campaign financing."

He was so busy last year

raising money, he said, that he paid little attention to how it had been used. The finance committee and the campaign committee were physically separate, operating "in watertight compartments," he said. He relied on subordinates to handle the cash and the checks and the records because "I was after contributions." He made it sound as though he had spent the campaign in a soundproof booth, somewhere offstage.

For all that, both the witness and his lawyer pictured Mr. Stans as a citizen earnestly trying to assist the authorities in getting to the bottom of the Watergate case.

Two hours earlier, Mr. Barker had vainly objected to his client's appearance now, while he is under indictment by a Federal grand jury in New York on charges of conspiracy to defraud the United States and obstruct justice in connection with a \$200,000 gift to the campaign.

Pledge of Cooperate

But, the committee having insisted on hearing Mr. Stans out on other matters, he read—from a statement prepared earlier—a pledge of cooperation. "I would like my appearance here today to be another service in the public interest," the former Cabinet member said.

As Mr. Barker told it in his prefatory statement, Mr. Stans had been "just as shocked and just as surprised as any person in this room" when Presidential campaign associates had been arrested last June 17 in the Watergate offices of the Democratic National Committee.

While Mr. Stans sat quietly beside him, Mr. Parker declared that after the break-in Mr. Stans, "consistent with his high standards of ethics and his position as a loyal American, demonstrated by years of service to this country, [had] set a standard for himself and his staff of complete cooperation with the investigation."

Mr. Parker recounted, and,

later, Mr. Stans related again, a long list of cooperative efforts. The fund raiser had "voluntarily" submitted to interrogations by the Federal Bureau of Investigation three times, had "voluntarily" given sworn testimony to Government prosecutors here, had "voluntarily" talked to the staff of the House Banking and Currency Committee, had done "everything he could to clarify matters" in six discussions with the General Accounting Office, had "voluntarily" given testimony to the New York grand jury, had even testified for the litigation in Florida, a criminal case down there.

Mr. Stans added that he had "cooperated fully with every official agency that has sought information from me."

Florida Aide Differs

Martin Dardis, the chief investigator for the Florida State's Attorney's office in Miami, recalled one of those instances differently today. He said in a telephone interview that Mr. Stans had, in fact, made a statement last Aug. 24 in Miami about funds that had wound up in the Miami bank account of one of the men arrested in the Watergate offices of the Democratic party.

"He didn't have any choice," Mr. Dardis said of Mr. Stans. "I subpoenaed him."

Furthermore, Mr. Dardis said, Mr. Stans had been unwilling to see the investigators while he was attending the Republican national convention and "I told him we were going to camp on his doorstep until he saw us."

Mr. Dardis sought later last year to secure Mr. Stans's appearance at a trial in Miami. Mr. Stans declined. Mr. Dardis sought to have the campaign official extradited. A District of Columbia court refused the request.

Mr. Stans's meeting with the staff of the House Banking and Currency Committee, when it was considering a full-scale Watergate investi-

gation last year, was intended as a preliminary to his appearance as a public witness. Lawyers for the campaign committee twice rejected requests for Mr. Stans to go before the House committee to testify, however, saying that it would have been "inappropriate" because of charges pending last September against the Watergate defendants.

At one point, in October, Representative Wright Patman of Texas, the Democratic chairman of the House committee, staged a brief hearing at which he faced four empty chairs intended for officials of the re-election campaign, Mr. Stans among them.

G.A.O. Official Comments

And Philip S. Hughes, the director of the Office of Federal Elections at the General Accounting Office, a Congressional investigation agency, said this afternoon that Mr. Stans had demonstrated "about the kind of cooperation I would have expected in an adversary situation" when he inquired into Mr. Stans's records.

Three weeks ago, the G.A.O. issued a report formally accusing Mr. Stans's committee of "an obvious attempt to evade the disclosure requirements" of the campaign spending law that went into effect last April 7. Mr. Stans insisted then that the committee had done no such thing.

He was calm, measured and confident in appearance as he began making the same defense in detail today. He managed a smile as he told the committee that there had been much stress last year in the venture that, he proudly noted, had raised "the largest amount ever spent in a political campaign."

He could, Mr. Stans said, assure the Senate committee "that I have made an honest and careful effort to abide by the spirit and intent of the election laws."