

## NIXON HOMES STIR SPENDING DISPUTE

G.S.A. Head Concedes Some  
'Mistakes' at Hearing

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WASHINGTON, Oct. 11 —

The head of the General Services Administration conceded today that his agency had made "mistakes" in spending Federal money at President Nixon's private homes, among them cutting the President's grass and trimming weeds at public expense.

However, Arthur P. Sampson, administrator of the G.S.A., insisted in testimony before a Congressional investigating committee that the mistakes had been insignificant and that his agency's work had not impoverished the appearance or increased the comfort of, or helped pay living expenses at, the President's residences at Key Biscayne, Fla., and San Clemente, Calif.

Mr. Sampson also testified under oath that Government expenditures at the homes had detracted from the value of the properties.

### Challenged by Panel

Members of the House Government Activities Subcommittee sharply challenged Mr. Sampson's assertions. The subcommittee chairman, Representative Jack Brooks, Democrat of Texas, charged the G.S.A. with "a deliberate attempt to obscure the facts involved in this investigation."

The subcommittee is examining the legality and propriety of Government expenditures of \$10.2-million in connection with President Nixon's private residences.

Today, Democratic members of the committee questioned G.S.A. officials about evidence suggesting that some of the expenditures by the Government's housekeeping agency at Key Biscayne had been unrelated to or exceeded the requirements of Presidential security, the ostensible reason for such spending.

Some of the evidence introduced at the hearing, which has been heated and marked by political partisanship, indicated that some of the public money had been spent at Key Biscayne to meet the personal desires of the President.

### Dispute Over Landscaping

For example, committee members disputed Mr. Sampson's contention that all of the expensive landscaping work at Key Biscayne had been done

for security purposes and had not enhanced the property.

The committee introduced a contract modification form from the G.S.A. to a Florida contractor indicating that a landscaping project had been changed and the changes had been made, in part, "to coincide with the President's desires."

The changes added nearly \$5,000 to the particular landscaping job, according to the agency's records.

Mr. Sampson maintained that the landscaping work at Key Biscayne had no more than met security requirements and had restored trees and shrubbery destroyed by the installation of security devices.

### 'Before' and 'After' Pictures

Representative John C. Culver, Democrat of Iowa, displayed "before" pictures of the Presidential complex at Key Biscayne showing bare sand and "after" pictures showing lush greenery and said that Mr. Sampson's statements had strained his credulity.

Mr. Sampson did concede that the agency had been "wrong" in supplying a full-time gardener to do landscaping around Mr. Nixon's private house in Key Biscayne and that the gardener had been "terminated" in July.

When asked about an ice machine installed at Key Biscayne, without authorization from the Secret Service, the G.S.A. officials asserted that the machine had been for the use of Secret Service and military personnel on duty there.

However, the committee introduced a memo signed by a G.S.A. functionary referring to the visit of the White House mess chief, a Commander Jackson, to Key Biscayne on May 21, 1970. The memo indicated that Commander Jackson had pointed out the absence of any ice cube maker at the complex and noted that the "President does not like ice cubes with holes in them."

The memo then noted that an "ice machine was installed on portico of house at 478 Bay Lane on May 26, 1970, and is functioning well."

### Shuffleboard Court

Another item that aroused the interest of the Democrats on the committee was a shuffleboard court installed by the G.S.A. The agency officials said that the court had merely replaced one torn up while installing security equipment.

However, committee members noted that the new shuffleboard court, installed by the agency had been made of black and white terrazzo tile, had cost \$2,000 and had replaced a concrete court that cost only a fraction of that amount.

Republicans on the committee, particularly Representative John Buchanan Jr. of Alabama, the ranking minority member, sought to bring out in questioning that the agency had made similar expenditures on the private homes of past Presidents.