

MITCHELL, STANS SEEK AID ON JURY

But Defense Changes Plans
After Meeting Sociologists

By JOHN KIFNER

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BOSTON, Feb. 25—Defense attorneys in the trial of former Attorney General John M. Mitchell and former Commerce Secretary Maurice H. Stans attempted to hire a team of social scientists that has picked winning juries for radicals in a series of cases brought by the Nixon Administration. However, they changed their minds after a preliminary discussion with the social scientists.

Mr. Mitchell and Mr. Stans are being tried in Federal District Court in New York on charges of obstructing a Federal investigation of Robert L. Vesco, a fugitive financier, and lying about it to a grand jury.

The social scientists, led by Jay Schulman, a sociologist, have been donating their time and skills in political trials, attempting to develop a computer-aided system of jury selection based on a political profile of the area, demographic material, observation of the prospective jurors' mannerisms and other factors.

Aided in Various Trials

The group has successfully aided the defense in the Harrisburg, Pa., trial of the Rev. Phillip F. Berrigan and other activists accused of plotting to kidnap Henry A. Kissinger, then President Nixon's national security adviser; the Camden 28 draft board raiders' case in New Jersey, and a trial of antiwar Vietnam veterans accused of plotting an assault on the 1972 Republican National Convention in Miami Beach.

The social scientists are currently working with the defense in the trials growing out of the seizure of Wounded Knee, S. D., by Indian militants and of the prisoners in the Attica Prison clash in New York State.

Lawyers for Mr. Stans got in touch with one of the group, of social scientists, Richard Christie, a professor of social psychology at Columbia University, after an article about the group's activities appeared in Time magazine last month.

Mr. Schulman said that he did not wish to work for the former Administration officials. Mr. Christie, however, was interested.

'Deserves a Fair Jury'

"Even John Mitchell deserves a fair jury," Professor Christie said in a telephone interview.

Mr. Mitchell's self-styled "law and order" administration of the Justice Department was marked by a number of highly controversial actions against radicals.

Mr. Christie, however, said he had set two conditions in his negotiations. First, any fee would be turned over to the Wounded Knee defense committee.

And, in effect, he said that he would attempt to pick a fair jury, but not necessarily a winning one.

"I told them I would be willing to identify among the prospective jurors those that were not fair and impartial. But I would not say which way they were biased," he said.

Mr. Christie said that Mr. Stan's attorneys appeared to feel that the conditions were reasonable and said they would call back.

A few days later, however, Mr. Christie said, he was told the deal was off. He attributed this to a feeling on the part of Mr. Mitchell that he was not fully in his camp.

In New York, a defense source said that there had been some discussion with Mr. Mitchell that he was not fully in his camp.

In New York, a defense source said that there had been some discussion with Mr. Christie, but that it had come to nothing.