

Trial Testimony

Dean's Role in The Vesco Case

New York

Ousted White House counsel John Dean III tried to postpone an investigation of financier Robert Vesco only five days before the 1972 presidential election, the former chairman of the Securities and Exchange Commission said yesterday.

Former chairman William C. Casey testified at the conspiracy and perjury trial of former cabinet members John Mitchell and Maurice Stans. They are accused of trying to block an SEC investigation of Vesco's affairs in exchange for a \$200,000 campaign contribution.

Casey said Dean called him on the Thursday before the 1972 election and asked him to postpone questioning two women who participated in the secret contribution.

Casey testified that Dean was afraid the examinations might result in a last-minute campaign smear. But the examinations went forward despite Dean's inquiry, Ca-

sey said.

Casey said Mitchell also queried him about the SEC investigation during a party in Mitchell's apartment. According to testimony yesterday, Dean also evoked Mitchell's name in a telephone call.

Casey said that in February, 1973, Dean told him that Mitchell had complained about a press leak by a member of the SEC staff. Casey said Dean charged that the SEC was reaching beyond the proper scope of the investigation.

Casey said that at the cocktail party, Mitchell asked him whether he was satisfied the investigation into Vesco's affairs was being conducted properly and without harassment or vindictiveness toward Vesco.

Casey said: "I told him I was satisfied that the investigation was being handled properly and that it was indeed a serious matter."

Reuters