

Stans Swears He Didn't 'Help Vesco in Any Way'

New York

Former Commerce Secretary Maurice Stans testified yesterday at his conspiracy trial that "on my oath, I never did anything to help Robert Vesco in any way."

Stans also flatly denied that he had conspired with his co-defendant, former Attorney General John Mitchell, to impede a federal investigation of Vesco's financial manipulations in return for a secret \$200,000 cash contribution to President Nixon's 1972 re-election campaign.

Prosecutor John R. Wing questioned Stans about a so-called \$350,000 "cash-in-hand fund," which included the Vesco contribution that

was deposited in a bank in 1972.

The inference was that the money had been deposited to cover the \$350,000 withdrawn earlier that year by then White House aide H. R. Haldeman, for a so-called "polling fund."

Allegations in the Watergate investigation suggested that the money withdrawn by Haldeman was used as hush money in the Watergate coverup. When Stans was asked about the identical amounts he replied that he thought they were "purely coincidental."

Stans said that his treasurer, Hugh Sloan, had set up the \$350,000 fund and he had nothing to do with it.

The 66-year-old former ac-

countant and self-made millionaire, who stepped down as Commerce secretary to head the campaign fund drive, also denied that he had lied to the grand jury.

One of the charges against Stans and Mitchell is lying to the grand jury.

Stans said he had given the grand jury "the facts as I then recalled them," apparently inserting the qualification because of a discrepancy between what he told the grand jury and his testimony Wednesday.

Stans told the grand jury he had discussed Vesco with presidential counsel John W. Dean III in January and testified Wednesday the conversation with Dean was on November 15.

Stans told the jury yesterday that at the time of his grand jury appearances his wife, Kathleen, was critically ill and detailed how he restricted his work schedule in order to be with her as much as possible.

Judge Lee P. Gagliardi told the jury he was admitting the testimony about Mrs. Stans "solely as indicating his (Stans') state of mind at the time."

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