

Mitchell Denies SEC Role

From News Dispatches

NEW YORK, April 10—Former Attorney General John N. Mitchell testified today that he intervened just once in a Securities and Exchange Commission fraud investigation of financier Robert L. Vesco. He said his action was not to obstruct the probe but to "further it."

"On your oath, did you do anything during this entire period of time to fix or quash the investigation," the 60-year-old former law-and-order man of the Nixon administration was asked.

"No, sir," replied Mitchell, the first American since the Teapot Dome scandals of 50

years ago to answer a criminal indictment based on his record in the Cabinet and in politics.

The exchange was the highlight of scatter-gun testimony by Mitchell denying charges by former SEC chairmen William Casey and G. Bradford Cook and former White House counsel John W. Dean III—all of whom linked the former attorney general and ex-Commerce Secretary Maurice H. Stans with Vesco's vain attempt to beat an SEC fraud rap.

Following Mitchell's testimony, U.S. District Court Judge Lee P. Gagliardi re-

cessed the trial until Monday, said he had "reasonable expectations" testimony would be concluded by the middle of next week.

Mitchell and former Commerce Secretary Maurice H. Stans are charged with conspiracy, obstruction of justice and perjury. They are accused of trying to block the SEC investigation of Vesco in return for the financier's secret \$200,000 cash contribution to President Nixon's re-election campaign.

Mitchell admitted under questioning by his lawyer that he arranged a meeting be-

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