

Mitchell-Stans Case Completed

By Arthur Everett
Associated Press

NEW YORK, April 22—Testimony ended today in the federal criminal conspiracy trial of former Attorney General John N. Mitchell and onetime Commerce Secretary Maurice H. Stans as the court proceedings entered their 10th week.

U.S. District Court Judge Lee P. Gagliardi scheduled closings arguments for Tuesday and Wednesday, and indicated the jury of nine men and three women would get the case late Wednesday.

In all, 59 witnesses were called, three of them appearing for both sides.

Mitchell and Stans are accused of conspiring to impede a Securities and Exchange Commission fraud probe into the international financial complex of multimillionaire Robert L. Vesco, in return for his secret \$200,000 cash con-

tribution to President Nixon's 1972 re-election campaign.

Among final rebuttal witnesses called by the government were Washington Post reporter Sally Quinn and ousted White House counsel John W. Dean III.

Miss Quinn testified Mitchell had an opportunity to tell a volunteer Republican campaign aide, Daniel Hofgren, to "stay away" from the Vesco matter.

She did not, however, say she saw Mitchell and Hofgren together at a fund-raising dinner where the remark was said to have been passed. Mitchell denied he ever saw Hofgren at the affair.

Hofgren testified that at the fund-raising gala at the Washington Hilton hotel March 8, 1972, he asked Mitchell if he'd

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seen Vesco that day and that the defendant told him, "Stay away from that." Hofgren said they bumped into each other at a reception that preceded the dinner and that he left before the actual dinner began.

Mitchell's denial of this account is the basis of a perjury count against him in the indictment. He said that he and his wife, Martha, arrived after the 7 p.m. reception was over and went directly into the banquet room to find most of the nearly 2,000 guests already seated for dinner.

Miss Quinn testified she covered the Washington Hilton dinner that night and interviewed the Mitchells for three or four minutes when they arrived about 8 p.m. The text of her subsequent story was not allowed into evidence at the trial.

"Then they went through the ropes and into the reception area," Miss Quinn continued, estimated it subsequently took 20 to 30 minutes to clear the reception area and get the guests into the banquet room.

"Did you see where they went?" Miss Quinn was asked

on cross-examination, regarding the Mitchells.

"Yes," she replied.

"Did they go straight through the reception hall?"

"They went into the crowd of people," Miss Quinn said.

Dean was a star government witness at the trial last month. He returned briefly a few days later to correct a brief portion of his original testimony.

In his initial appearance as a witness, Dean said he was hopeful his testimony at the Mitchell-Stans trial would be considered when he comes up for sentencing. He has pleaded guilty to obstructing justice in the investigation of the 1972 break-in of Democratic National headquarters in the Watergate in Washington.

"Have you been sentenced yet?" asked Mitchell's lawyer, Peter Fleming Jr., as he opened cross-examination.

"No, I have not," Dean replied.

The 35-year-old Dean's latest appearance was intended by the government to refute certain aspects of Stan's testimony. For example, the former Commerce Secretary said he had reported on Vesco's SEC troubles in a Nov. 13, 1972 telephone conversation with Dean.

"No, I have no recollection of that conversation," Dean testified.

Stans said the two talked together again later about Vesco during a plane flight from Washington to New York.

"Did you have a conversation with Mr. Stans about Vesco on that flight to New York?" Dean was asked.

"No, I did not," he replied.

There was defense testimony that Stans in conversation with Mitchell was concerned solely with the propriety of the Vesco contribution and that Mitchell assured him it was proper to accept it.

David Brodsky, an assistant U.S. attorney at the time of Mitchell's original interrogation said:

"Mr. Mitchell stated to us that Stans called him and stated this fellow Vesco was making a contribution and there was an SEC investigation of Vesco and what were the public relations aspects of accepting the contribution."

Hugh Sloan Jr., treasurer of Stans' Finance Committee to Re-elect the President, was recalled as a rebuttal witness to go over again certain book-keeping methods employed in connection with campaign cash taken in by the committee.