

Begins in N.Y. Case

Associated Press

NEW YORK, April 23 — The lawyer for former Commerce Secretary Maurice H. Stans concluded today that the government had contracted "Vesco-itis" in its charge against Stans and former Attorney General John N. Mitchell.

In the first defense summation at Stans' criminal conspiracy trial, the former Cabinet officer was pictured by his lawyer as an honest man who worked hard for President Nixon and did nothing to aid financier Robert L. Vesco, the target of a federal fraud investigation.

The defendants, who quit the Cabinet to run Mr. Nixon's 1972 re-election campaign, are accused of impeding a Securities and Exchange Commission fraud investigation of Vesco in return for a secret \$200,000 cash contribution to the campaign.

Summations for Mitchell and the prosecution are expected on Wednesday. After Judge Lee P. Gagliardi's charge on the law, the jury is expected to get the case Thursday.

Stans' lawyer, Walter Bonner, said the government had isolated "one teeny portion" of the 66-year-old Stans' life—his brief connection with Vesco—and tried to make it into a crime.

He said that in nearly 10 weeks of trial there was no evidence that Stans had fixed anything for Vesco. The 38-year-old financier was indicted with Mitchell and Stans, but fled the country.

The charges against the former Cabinet members are conspiracy, obstruction of justice and lying to a grand jury. Each defendant is charged with nine counts, each of which carries a maximum penalty of five years in prison.

Bonner said that Stans had only met Vesco once. He said he had met Vesco's top business aide twice and had contact on only six occasions with Vesco's lawyer, Harry Sears, former New Jersey Republican politician.

The government alleges that Sears, a friend of Mitchell's, was the go-between in the contribution conspiracy. Sears was also indicted but was granted immunity for his testimony.

Bonner said that in contrast to his few contacts with the Vesco group, during the period of the alleged conspiracy, Stans had had 500 meetings with his staff, 100 meetings with Mitchell's staff, 600 meetings with contributors, 1,900 telephone calls, thousands of pieces of correspondence and had traveled 45,000 miles and given 90 speeches.

