

Gurney Completes 8-Hour Testimony

By Frank Beacham

Special to The Washington Post

JACKSONVILLE, Fla., May 14—Grim-faced and silent, Sen. Edward Gurney (R-Fla.) ended eight hours of testimony today before a federal grand jury probing a reported \$400,000 slush fund raised on his behalf.

Gurney, a member of the Senate Watergate committee, refused to answer reporters' questions during his two days of testimony. He was accompanied by his attorney, C. Harris Dittmar of Jacksonville, and two armed federal guards provided by the General Services Administration.

Gurney, 60, hid his face from more than two dozen waiting reporters Monday as he entered the federal courthouse through a rear freight entrance. Guards refused to allow the press near him as he arrived.

According to Gurney's former administrative assistant, James Allison, the senator opened his grand jury appearance with a prepared statement asserting his innocence. Allison said the statement was "along the lines of what he said Dec. 6."

Allison was referring to a news conference that day at which Gurney said he may have been "careless and unobserving" but was guilty of "no wrong-doing" in connection with the raising of funds from builders seeking his influence with federal housing officials.

As Gurney testified, his former fund-raiser, Larry Williams, 29, of Orlando, waited

with federal investigations in another room on the same floor of the courthouse.

Williams is now serving a one-year federal prison sentence for his role in the illicit fund-raising scheme.

Gurney has been indicted by a state grand jury on a charge of violating Florida election laws by not reporting contributions raised by Williams.

Allison also testified today and said afterward that he presented the grand jury with a 44-page document outlining his findings when he conducted a private probe of the fund-raising for Gurney last year.

Though Gurney and Allison have said they expected to be among the final witnesses in the eight-month-long probe, sources close to the investigation say it could be four weeks before the grand jury decides whether to hand down any indictments.