

Nixon Costs U.S. \$1 Million a Year

By Jack Anderson

It's going to cost the taxpayers well over \$1 million a year to keep Richard Nixon in his accustomed style.

Battling behind the scenes for this bountiful budget are two Nixon appointees, General Services Administrator Arthur Sampson and Budget Director Roy Ash.

The day after Mr. Nixon gave up the presidency and retired to San Clemente in disgrace, Sampson flew out to California to meet secretly with Nixon aides Ron Ziegler and Steve Bull. They talked about all the money it would take to set up the former President as a private citizen.

Then Sampson and Ash put their heads together and decided to request the royal sum of \$850,000 for the transition. Routinely, President Ford sent their request to Capitol Hill with his blessing.

There was an outcry from members of Congress who complained this was too much money to lavish on a President who had resigned to avoid impeachment and conviction. Except for a timely pardon, they noted, Mr. Nixon might have wound up in prison where his keep would have cost the taxpayers considerably less.

A subcommittee headed by Rep. Tom Steed (D-Okla.) has now recommended slashing the \$850,000 transition money down

to \$393,000. This would include a \$60,000 pension and a \$96,000 staff, which Nixon will continue to draw for the rest of his life.

The generous Sampson has also exempted Nixon from paying rent on the government office space he is using in California. Sampson tried to tell us this merely avoids "double book-keeping." But it also provides Mr. Nixon with \$100,000 worth of free office space, which won't have to come out of his budget.

In addition to all this, it will cost the Secret Service at least \$622,000 a year to protect the former President.

Sampson also doesn't like to talk about the entourage now serving Mr. Nixon at San Clemente. At least 32 persons are working directly for Mr. Nixon but are paid by assorted government agencies. Their salaries add up to a whopping \$576,000. Because they are "on detail," they can also collect \$40 a day for expenses.

On loan from the White House at a salary of \$42,500, for example, is former press secretary Ron Ziegler. He brought along his favorite press assistant, pretty Dianne Sawyer, who makes \$21,000. Yet there is no press office at San Clemente.

Mr. Nixon has gone into such complete seclusion that wisecrackers have dubbed San Clemente "Elba West." Yet the non-speaking Mr. Nixon is attended by speechwriter Ray Price at a

\$40,000 salary. A former Nixon attorney, Mike Sterlacci, is also on "temporary assignment" at San Clemente, drawing down \$28,263 from the taxpayers.

The former President's loyal secretary, Rose Mary Woods, still collects her \$36,000 paycheck from the White House, and Steve Bull receives \$34,000 as Mr. Nixon's chief errand boy. Seven other White House employees are "detailed" to Mr. Nixon.

The Defense Department has loaned him another five men, including three chauffeurs. Mr. Nixon's personal maid and valet, meanwhile, have been placed quietly on the National Park Service payroll.

And the loyal Sampson has assigned 11 maintenance workers from the General Services Administration to keep the Nixon estates in tip-top shape.

Congress has had so much difficulty getting full information on the Nixon spending that Sen. Joseph Montoya (D-N.M.) has fired off a private letter to the budget chief demanding "a comprehensive and complete listing of all federal personnel detailed to the former President..."

"This information," Montoya added, "must be delivered to the subcommittee's offices by the close of business Sept. 23." The Senator intends to take up the answers at public hearings today.

Footnote: Sampson defended the Nixon budget as appropriate and necessary. He contended that the Lyndon Johnson transition had cost \$541,800, which didn't include the time spent cataloguing the Johnson papers while he was still in office.

Washington Whirl—To combat inflation, Sen. Barry Goldwater (R-Ariz.) has proposed a 10 per cent salary cut for federal officials. He might set a better example if he gave up the \$7,800 annual Air Force retirement he collects on top of his \$42,500-a-year Senate salary... Sen. James Abourezk (D-S.D.) will try to cut off military pensions to retired officers who collect federal salaries in excess of \$36,000... We recently counted 40 repressive governments which receive U.S. aid. Sen. Alan Cranston (D-Calif.), using a different definition, tallied 57 authoritarian regimes on the dole. All told, the American taxpayers have shelled out an astounding \$164 billion in foreign aid since the end of World War II... A troubled young consumer advocate named Larry Finkelstein wrote us a note just before he leaped to his death. The note urged the press to fight the "inordinate influence of special interest groups"... A frustrated White House aide complained to us: "Everyone wants to stop inflation—at someone else's expense."

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