

Ex-Nixon Aide Quits GOP Post

Washington

Former White House political aide Harry J. Dent, under investigation for a minor violation of the Federal Corrupt Practices Act, resigned yesterday as general counsel of the Republican National Committee.

Republican National Chairman Mary Louise Smith announced to a closed-door session of the party's executive committee that she had accepted the resignation of Dent, who is expected to plead guilty to a misdemeanor charge of aiding and abetting a violation of the act.

Dent, 43, widely regarded as a principal author of former President Nixon's "southern strategy," has been under investigation by the Watergate special prosecutor's office for his alleged role in distributing campaign funds from a secret White House fund in behalf of a committee that failed to register as required by law.

The Republican executive committee also approved a far-ranging \$2 million program aimed at refurbishing the sagging image of the Republican party.

One of its central features is a television advertising campaign intended to attract voters to the GOP.

Approval of the program was tantamount to a vote of confidence for Mrs. Smith and for Eddie Mahe, the executive director of the Republican National Commit-

tee.

However, Missouri Governor Christopher S. Bond indicated reservations about the cost and timing of the program and former national chairman Ray Bliss said that the success of the party will depend upon President Ford's performance, not upon any advertising campaign.

Mrs. Smith promised that the content of the advertising will be determined by the results of a survey on voter attitudes now being conducted by Detroit pollster Robert Teeter rather than on preconceptions.

The investigation of Dent arose from a statement made last February by Herbert Kalmbach, Mr. Nixon's former personal attorney, when Kalmbach pleaded guilty to federal campaign law violations. Kalmbach said that he, Dent, former White House chief of staff H. R. Haldeman and Jack A. Gleason, a GOP fund raiser formerly on Dent's White House staff, ran the campaign fund distribution from a District of Columbia townhouse.

The "townhouse operation" as the government called it, reportedly was headed by Gleason and distributed about \$12 million to Republican House and Senate candidates. Dent's role reportedly was to determine the allocation of the campaign funds.

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