

Inquiry Hears Businessmen in Government

NYTimes DEC 9 1975

Special to The New York Times

WASHINGTON, Dec. 8—A House subcommittee was told today that political advance men for President Nixon's 1972 re-election campaign were sought out from the ranks of business executives who were then employed by the Federal Government under a government-business exchange program.

Joseph I. McCullen Jr., executive director of the Presidential Executive Interchange Program in 1971 and 1972, told the Subcommittee on Energy and Environment that he saw nothing wrong with having asked the executives if they would like to be advance men for the Nixon campaign. He also said that, barring a "tech-

nical violation" of the Hatch Act, he would do it again.

The Hatch Act restricts political activity by Federal employees. Representative John D. Dingell, the Michigan Democrat who heads the subcommittee, has asked the Civil Service Commission to find out whether activity like Mr. McCullen's violates the act.

Whether It Should End

Mr. McCullen is now Assistant Secretary of the Navy for Manpower and Reserve Affairs. During the hearing, he said that he is "known as a talent scout and recruiter across this country."

The subcommittee is trying to determine whether the six-year-old exchange program is, in the words of Mr. Dingell, "so richly fraught with oppor-

tunities for rascality" that it ought to end.

Chief among the subcommittee's concerns are whether executives are put in government positions where they can benefit their private employers and whether the program has been subverted by political influence.

Another witness today, Robert S. Smith, the first director of the program, said that Frederic V. Malek, a Nixon Administration official, had asked him "how we were going to get good Republicans in the program." Mr. Smith, now director of personnel and training for the Justice Department, said he had told Mr. Malek that "we weren't, that the program was nonpartisan."

According to Mr. Smith, Mr. Malek, who was the Deputy

Were Sought for Nixon Political Duty

Under Secretary of Health, Education and Welfare, also asked an International Business Machines executive whom he was interviewing for a government position under the program.

Mr. Malek later became deputy director of the Office of Management and Budget. He left the government last year.

Was Asked for Names

Mr. McCullen told the subcommittee that he had been asked by John E. Clarke, a staff assistant to the President, for the names of potential advance men for the Nixon campaign. He said that at a meeting of the business executives—all then working for and being paid by the Federal Government—he asked all the execu-

tives who would be interested in doing the political job after they left the Government to raise their hands.

He said he forwarded the names of some of them to the White House.

"I did that primarily," he explained, "because this was a group of fine, hard-working, good-looking young executives."

Apparently none of the businessmen whom Mr. McCullen nominated became advance men for the campaign.

Representative John Krebs, Democrat of California, said he was disturbed by Mr. McCullen's attitude.

"Don't you see the problem," he asked, "in recruiting people while they are in government service—asking them to parti-

cipate in what is probably the most highly partisan political activity?"

"As I look at it," Mr. McCullen replied, "I don't see the problem."

He finally said that if he were still director of the exchange program and knew that persons like Mr. Krebs were upset by the activity, he would have to reconsider his position. He repeatedly made the point that he did not regard what he had done as "recruiting." He argued that he had acted only "as a source."

Subcommittee members asked Mr. McCullen about three executives whom they saw as having been placed in situations of apparent conflict.

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