

Rep. Ford Failed to Report

By James R. Polk
Associated Press

House Republican Leader Gerald R. Ford omitted reporting \$11,500 in campaign contributions last fall from stockbrokers, bankers, doctors, an oil man and a labor union fund.

But the Michigan congressman says his action "was within the law."

The checks were signed over by Ford to Republican headquarters here at the same time that the party was pumping roughly the same amount—\$12,233—back to Ford's district to pay off post-election debts.

The Michigan congressman, who acts as treasurer of his own main campaign committee, did not list the \$11,500 in contributions on his sworn statement to the House required under the Corrupt Practices Act.

Instead, when the post-election money wound up in other Ford campaign funds in his hometown of Grand Rapids, it was reported as a donation from the Republican Party.

Ford said he turned the checks over to the GOP headquarters because he had reached the limit his own campaign committee could obtain under Michigan law. He said he had no knowledge of how or why the similar amount was fed back into his other campaign groups.

His sworn report to the House said: "I hereby certify that the following is a correct and itemized account of each contribution received by me or by any person for me with my knowledge or consent . . ."

Ford said in an interview that he had personally endorsed the checks his "Ford for Congress Committee" funneled to the GOP headquarters. He added:

"I would say, under the interpretation of the law as it has been interpreted over the years, that my action was within the law."

Not included on Ford's sworn report were:

- A \$5,000 check from the

Securities Industry Campaign Committee, a political fund for Wall Street stock brokers.

- \$3,000 from oilman John M. Shaheen of New York City.

• \$2,000 from the Bankers Political Action Committee, a fund for banks which opposed a regulatory bill that eventually was passed by Congress.

- \$1,000 from the political arm of the Boilermakers-Blacksmiths union with headquarters in Kansas City, Kan.

• \$500 from the Michigan Doctors Political Action Committee.

\$11,500

All the checks were listed by the Republican Congressional Committee as coming into its coffers between Oct. 30 and Nov. 9.

The companion Republican National Finance Advisory Committee, run by the same man at GOP headquarters, sent a total of \$6,760 in contributions to two other Ford groups in Grand Rapids Nov. 4 and 20. The GOP headquarters also paid directly \$5,473 in post-election advertising and printing bills from Grand Rapids firms.

In contrast, other Republican House candidates got a maximum of \$7,000 from the congressional group under its specific formula last fall.

Ford said, "I personally had nothing to do with" the post-election flow of money into his district and had no knowledge of how it came about.

Ford, who has served in Congress 22 years and has been GOP leader since 1965, won re-election easily last fall, trouncing Democrat Mrs. Jean McKee 88,000 votes to 55,000.

The \$5,000 from the Wall Street group was by far its largest single contribution, triple any of its checks for Senate races.

Ford said the check was delivered to his office by Walter Lever, a friend he had known since football days. Ford said, "I didn't ask any questions. He simply brought the check in." Shaheen, whose oil firm has

refineries in Canada, California and Alaska, also described Ford as an old friend. Although his \$3,000 appears on the GOP's report instead of Ford's, he said his contribution was for Ford and not for any national committee.

"I don't deal with impersonal committees. They waste the money," Shaheen said in a telephone interview.

Ford's four campaign committees, including the one he oversaw plus Latvians for Ford, Veterans for Ford, and the Greek-American Committee for Ford, handled a total

of about \$30,000 in his re-election effort.

In their public reports filed in Grand Rapids, the Latvians and the Veterans listed the \$6,760 they got after Nov. 3 as a contribution from the Republican Congressional Committee.

Other than the GOP money, the major donors to Ford's campaign were listed as Richard M. Scaife, an executive in Mellon family firms in Pittsburgh, and Forbes Mann, head of LTV Aerospace Corp. in Dallas. Each gave \$2,000 to either Latvians or Veterans.

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