

Podell Pleads Not Guilty In Bribery Indictment

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NEW YORK, July 23 (UPI) — Rep. Bertram L. Podell (D-N.Y.) pleaded innocent today to a government indictment charging him with taking a \$41,350 bribe from an airline seeking a new route before the Civil Aeronautics Board.

Podell told newsmen later the indictment was an attempt by the Nixon administration to harass him and other liberal congressmen.

He also charged that documents relating to this case had been stolen from his offices in New York and Washington and from his New York apartment during 1970-71.

Podell said that last Oct. 9 while he was being investigated in connection with the alleged bribery, a State Department lobbyist, Thomas W. Fina, visited his congressional office.

He said Fina asked him to support Mr. Nixon's Indochina war posture and quoted the lobbyist as saying, "The President wants to know who his friends are."

Podell was indicted July 12 on 12 counts of allegedly taking \$41,350 from Florida Atlantic Airlines to use his influence in helping it obtain a new air route to Bahama.

The indictment also charges him with various counts of

perjury, fraud and conspiracy in connection with his demeanor while the case was under investigation by the FBI and other authorities.