

Phillips Oil, Official Fined for Nixon Gift

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By Timothy S. Robinson
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The Phillips Petroleum Co. and its board chairman pleaded guilty yesterday to charges of making a \$100,000 illegal contribution to President Nixon's re-election campaign.

As has been the case in six previous such charges returned by the Watergate special prosecutor's office, both the firm and its chairman, William W. Keeler, received the maximum fines for the offense. Phillips was fined \$5,000, and Keeler was fined \$1,000.

Assistant Special Prosecutor Thomas F. McBride also disclosed that Phillips had contributed up to \$60,000 to "a substantial number" of candidates for Congress in 1970 and 1972.

McBride said the oil company would not be prosecuted for those donations but that the candidates for Congress who received them are under "active investigation" by the special prosecutor's office.

He said these candidates, none of whom he would identify, must have known that the money came from corporate funds before they can be prosecuted successfully.

McBride also said there is question whether the special prosecutor's office could actually move forward with such prosecutions if the cases develop, or whether they would be transferred to some other prosecutorial body.

U.S. District Judge Howard F. Corcoran imposed the sentences after Phillips and Keeler waived a pre-sentence report.

Neither Keeler nor the

firm's attorney made any comment concerning the donations, and the total court action took about five minutes.

According to the information filed yesterday before U.S. District Chief Judge John J. Sirica, the firm made the donation to the Nixon re-election campaign between Feb. 9, 1972 and March 28, 1972.

The donation was made in cash, the prosecutor charged, and Keeler "consented to the contribution" in violation of election financing laws.

Phillips was the seventh corporation to admit voluntarily to the special prosecutor's office that it had donated corporate money to the Nixon campaign.

American Airlines was the first to come forward, followed by Minnesota Mining and Manufacturing Co.; Goodyear Tire and Rubber Co.; Braniff Airways; Gulf Oil Corp. and Ashland Oil, Inc.

An eighth firm, American Shipbuilding Co. of Cleveland, is known to be under investigation by the special prosecutor with regard to campaign contributions.



By Frank Johnston—The Washington Post

Phillips Petroleum Board Chairman William Keeler leaves court after fine of \$1,000 for illegal contribution.