

## TEAMSTER CHIEF DENIES CHARGES

Secret Aid Report Called Lie  
—He'll Seek Re-election

By PHILIP SHABECOFF

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WASHINGTON, July 5 —

Frank E. Fitzsimmons, the president of the teamster's union, angrily assailed as a "pack of damn lies" today published reports that his union had helped funnel secret campaign funds from Las Vegas gambling interests to President Nixon's re-election campaign.

Mr. Fitzsimmons also denied what he said were "scurrilous" reports linking him to the Mafia.

At a rare news conference at teamster headquarters here, Mr. Fitzsimmons said that he intended to run for re-election as president of the big union in 1976 whether or not James R. Hoffa runs.

Hoffa, whose prison sentence for jury tampering was commuted by President Nixon, was prohibited by the terms of the commutation from engaging in union activity until 1981. However, he said recently that he intended to run for the presidency of his home local in Detroit next year and then to seek to regain the presidency of the International Brotherhood of Teamsters.

Mr. Fitzsimmons, who had been an aide to Hoffa, took over the top spot when Hoffa went to prison.

### \$600,000 Aid Reported

This week's Time magazine said that the special Watergate prosecutor, Archibald Cox, was investigating reports that the teamsters' union used its influence last year to collect \$6,000,000 in campaign contributions from "individuals in the Las Vegas area" who had received loans from the union's Central States carried accounts of the magazine report.

Reports of Government surveillance of the teamsters to investigate alleged connections between the union and the Mafia, involving efforts by organized crime to skim funds from the union's pension and welfare funds, also appeared in The New York Times. These accounts described reports by Federal agents of meetings between Mr. Fitzsimmons and alleged Mafia figures to discuss a

union health plan.

At today's news conference, Mr. Fitzsimmons "categorically" denied the campaign contribution and Mafia reports, adding, "I am going to protect myself."

Mr. Fitzsimmons said that that Federal authorities had never asked him about any possible connection between organized crime and teamster pension funds.

"If [Assistant Attorney General Henry F.] Peterson, Cox or Sam Dash [chief counsel to the Senate Watergate committee] have any questions, they can come to me and ask," he said. "They don't need any electronic surveillance."

Today's news conference was called by Mr. Fitzsimmons ostensibly to discuss the union's new master freight agreement with the trucking industry, signed last week. He went over the contract in detail and said that the wage-benefit increase averaged 6.1 per cent a year over 33 months. This figure did not include a guaranteed cost-of-living increase, however.

### \$25,000 a Year Wages

Among other facets of the contract cited by Mr. Fitzsimmons was the over-the-road truck drivers would average about \$25,000 a year by the end of the contract allowance, that meal allowances for drivers on the road would go up by \$1, to \$6 to \$7 a meal, and that the pension fund would enable truckers to retire after 20 years with a \$450 monthly pension at the age of 57.

But Mr. Fitzsimmons obviously had other subjects on his mind as demonstrated by the heated comments he volunteered on the newspaper reports of teamster activities and on Hoffa's plans.

He bridled, for example, at a question about whether Hoffa had participated in achieving the new contract.

"I don't know why anyone should believe that Hoffa is still an effective force," he said. "He hasn't had anything to do with the union in six years."

Asked about the possibility of Hoffa's running for president of the union at its next convention on July 4, 1976, Mr. Fitzsimmons replied, "I don't know what is on his mind."

Asserting that Hoffa had accepted release from prison on the basis of noninvolvement in union affairs, Mr. Fitzsimmons commented somewhat cryptically, "He is better off outside than inside."

As for himself, he said, "If the good Lord is willing, I am going to be a candidate with Dusty Miller [Secretary-treasurer of the union] no matter who else is running."