

INVESTIGATIONS

The Teamsters' Friend

Special Watergate Prosecutor Archibald Cox, TIME has learned, is investigating reports that Teamsters Union officials used their influence in 1972 to collect contributions to the President's re-election campaign from individuals in the Las Vegas area who had received loans from the union's welfare plan. These contributions are believed to have totaled as much as \$600,000, but investigators have been told that only half of that amount ever reached the Nixon campaign fund.

Some of the Teamster officials who are cooperating in the investigation are loyalists of ex-Teamster Boss James Hoffa, who was imprisoned in 1967 for jury tampering and racketeering in the union's pension fund. Hoffa was freed

in December 1971 through a presidential commutation of his sentence, but the terms of his release restricted him from retaking control of the union.

During the campaign, Hoffa's friends aggressively solicited contributions for Nixon's re-election. According to some of these officials, Charles W. Colson, the former special presidential counsel, hinted that, in return for their support, the bars on Hoffa's union activities might be lifted. But after the election the restrictions remained in effect. Instead of Hoffa the White House seems to favor the Teamsters' current boss, Frank Fitzsimmons, who on occasion has flown from San Clemente to Washington on the presidential jet. Colson's spokesman and law partner—their firm now represents the Teamsters—denies that Colson had anything to do with the Teamster fund raising for 1972.