

Grand Juries Probing Teamsters in 2 Cities

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Federal grand juries in both Chicago and San Francisco are investigating alleged illegal conduct by officials of the Teamsters union, Justice Department sources said yesterday.

Indictments may be handed down within the next few months in both cities, the sources said, in what may amount to a major drive against corruption in a union that has been largely friendly to President Nixon.

The Chicago probe is apparently focusing on the affairs of Allen Dorfman, a longtime friend and business associate of former Teamsters President James R. Hoffa.

Already indicted on previous occasions on charges of conspiracy and receiving illegal kickbacks, Dorfman is again under investigation in connection with illegal uses of the union's massive pension fund.

The investigation there, which may reveal ties between pension fund officials and organized crime, according to the sources, is being directed by James Thompson, the U.S. attorney who has also brought cases against close associates of Chicago Democratic Mayor Richard J. Daley.

In San Francisco, the focus is on alleged illegal payoffs by lettuce growers to union officials, as part of a drive to help the Teamsters replace the United Farm Workers as the organization representing California agricultural workers.

Some of that money, it is believed, has gone to pay Teamsters "security squads" whose mission is to "protect" farm workers who have gone over to the Teamsters from the UFW, which is led by Cesar Chavez.

More than 40 witnesses testified before the San Francisco grand jury last fall, according to a letter recently sent by Attorney General Elliot L. Richardson to Democratic Sens. Edward M. Kennedy (Mass.), Harrison A. Williams Jr. (N.J.), Walter F. Mondale (Minn.) and Jacob K. Javits (R-N.Y.)

"One factual problem has been the corroboration of

somewhat inconsistent testimony of the central witness before the grand jury," Richardson said.

The Attorney General expressed the hope that "the matter will be finally resolved" in a new round of grand jury testimony scheduled to begin next Thursday.

The Justice Department sources said yesterday that the investigation will be resumed "on the basis of new information"—apparently a new witness who has recently come forward to testify.

But the sources warned that the new hearings will take at least a month and that it is not yet clear whether anyone can be indicted under provisions of the Taft-Hartley Act, which make employer payoff to union officials illegal.

At the same time, an official in the Civil Rights Division at the Justice Department revealed that the Community Relations Service had been "monitoring" conflicts in the California grape vineyards and lettuce fields between the

Teamsters and the United Farm Workers union.

In addition, he said, the FBI has been asked to investigate individual civil rights complaints filed by UFW loyalists claiming to have been harassed by the Teamsters squads.

But the official said that the Civil Rights Division is unlikely to accept Kennedy's proposal that official "observers" be sent to the fields as they were to the Deep South during the 1960s.

Teamsters President Frank Fitzsimmons was an ardent supporter of President Nixon during last year's presidential election, and Mr. Nixon commuted Hoffa's sentence on a federal jury tampering conviction in December, 1971.

Critics of the administration have charged that the White House has often interfered in criminal investigations of the Teamsters, but the sources said yesterday that Richardson, who is seeking to establish the independence of the Justice Department under his control, has given the green light for the probe to go forward.