

S.C. Firm Head Fined For Illegal Nixon Gift

By Timothy S. Robinson 9.18.74
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A Columbia, S. C. architectural firm and its president pleaded guilty before U.S. District Chief Judge George L. Hart Jr. here yesterday to charges of making \$10,000 in illegal contributions to the Nixon re-election campaign.

The firm, LBC&W, Inc., was fined the maximum \$5,000 on one charge under a statute that makes it illegal for a government contractor to donate to a political campaign.

Prosecutors said the firm had several government contracts, but that there is no evidence that the campaign contributions influenced the awarding of those contracts.

William Lyles Sr., the firm's president and board chairman, was fined the maximum \$1,000 on each of two counts of making illegal corporate campaign contributions.

Lyles, who was described by his attorney, Edward Bennett Williams, as having a "perfectly spotless" record before the plea, could have been sentenced to as much as one year in jail on the misdemeanor charge.

According to a criminal in-

formation filed by the Watergate special prosecutor's office, the firm maintained a bonus system out of which it would pay money to certain employees.

After payment of taxes and other legal obligations by the firm, the employees would return the balance to an account kept by the firm for the purpose of making political contributions.

Lyles would direct the distribution of that fund, according to the information, and a total of \$10,000 was donated to the Nixon campaign. The fund existed from July 20, 1971, until April 6, 1972, the information charged.

Lyles was charged with making a \$4,000 contribution to Nixon campaign committees on July 20, 1971, and a \$3,000 contribution on Nov. 16, 1971, out of that fund.

LBC&W is the 13th firm to be found guilty of making illegal campaign contributions during a probe of such practices by the Watergate special prosecutor's office.