

Rocky apologizes for book incident

Associated Press

NEW YORK — Vice President-designate Nelson Rockefeller apologized to former Supreme Court Justice Arthur Goldberg by telephone yesterday for failing to prevent publication of a book derogatory to his opponent in the 1970 race for New York governor.

"I take full responsibility for the whole regrettable episode," he said to Goldberg and then telephoned President Ford to whom he read the text of his apology.

White House news secretary Ron Nessen said Ford had no immediate comment.

Beleagued not only by the book dispute but by a political uproar over almost \$2 million in gifts to present and former associates, Rockefeller discussed with Ford what effect these inci-

dents might have on congressional confirmation of his appointment as vice president, an aide to the former governor said.

The aide said Ford assured Rockefeller "there is no problem."

Goldberg had called the book pornographic and demanded a congressional investigation of the circumstances surrounding its publication.

After hearing Rockefeller's apology, he issued a statement in Washington saying:

"The Senate and House committees and ultimately both bodies of Congress are the proper agencies to determine whether Gov. Rockefeller's now-admitted misconduct and its attempted coverup are compatible with

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his being confirmed vice president.

"I am content to leave this overriding question in their hands since this is their constitutional responsibility to the people of our country."

Informed by the Associated Press of Goldberg's statement, Rockefeller said "I agree with Justice Goldberg that it is entirely a matter for the committees and Congress."

The controversy over the book erupted almost simultaneously with release by Rockefeller of a list of 18 former associates who received gifts totaling at least \$1.7 million from him over the past 17 years.

Source close to Rockefeller said he had supplied the information to the Senate six weeks ago and now felt he was the victim of selective leaks from the supposedly confidential material.

"That is why we have released the information now," a spokesman said.

The information consisted of a list of loans or gifts made by Rockefeller to former or present public officials from 1957 through the third quarter of 1974 and of loans or gifts to specific individuals named in requests from the Senate or House panels.

These categories did not cover a \$10,000 Rockefeller gift to Joan Braden, wife of syndicated columnist Thomas W. Braden, and there are reports that Rockefeller made other gifts to influential persons who do not fit into either of the two categories.

The former governor denied again yesterday that he had known his brother Laurence had put up \$60,000 to finance publication of Victor Lasky's "Arthur J. Goldberg, the Old and the New," or that he was aware of its contents.

Publication details were handled by John Wells, long-time Rockefeller associate who dealt with Arlington House, a conservative publishing firm in New Rochelle, N.Y. The firm is owned by the Starr Broadcasting group of which columnist William Buckley Jr. is chairman.

Approximately 100,000 copies were given to Rockefeller campaign aides for distribution.

"Jack Wells told me early in the 1970 campaign," Rockefeller said, "that Victor Lasky was working on a biography of Arthur Goldberg."

I didn't pay the matter any attention because I've always felt such a book coming out during a campaign doesn't cut any ice."

In his telephoned apology to Goldberg, which was followed by a telegram, Rockefeller did not mention this, but said only, "It is quite clear that when the project was brought to my attention, I should have immediately taken steps to see to it that it was stopped as utterly alien and incompatible with the standards I have always tried to observe in my political life."