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Democrats' Lists Of '70-'71 Finances Are Subpoenaed

By Brooks Jackson
Associated Press

The Watergate Special Prosecution Force has subpoenaed finance reports of the Democratic Party for 1970 and 1971 in a grand jury investigation into possible violation of a campaign reporting law.

Democratic National Chairman Robert S. Strauss and a spokesman for the Watergate prosecutors declined comment yesterday on the investigation. Strauss also declined a reporter's request to view copies of the subpoenaed documents, which are no longer public.

The subpoenaed reports cover the period in which Strauss, who was then party treasurer, accepted a \$50,000 cash gift from Ashland Oil, Inc. The oil company admitted in court last December that the money was an illegal corporation donation.

Strauss has said he was unaware of the illegal nature of the gift. He also has said he did not disclose the identity of the donor in public reports that he filed at the time, and that he included it instead under un-itemized miscellaneous contributions.

The Corrupt Practices Act, which was in force at the time, required that political committees operating in two or more states disclose publicly the names and addresses of all donors of \$100 or more. Strauss has said he felt the \$50,000 gift had come originally from many donors who each gave less than \$100, and so he did not feel obliged to report the source.

No further prosecution can be brought for the illegal \$50,000 gift itself because on New Year's Day a new law shortened the statute of limitations on such matters from five years to three. Ashland said the gift was made sometime before February, 1972, putting it out of reach now.

However, any violation of

the reporting requirements of the Corrupt Practices Act may still be prosecuted if it occurred within the last five years.

Assistant Special Prosecutor Earl Galus stated in his subpoena for the party's 1970 and 1971 records that the grand jury was probing a possible violation of the disclosure requirements of the Corrupt Practices Act.

Galus signed the subpoena Jan. 30, and it was made public in the House of Representatives last Thursday. The subpoena was issued by the clerk of the House, who has custody of the reports filed under the act. Since these reports are sealed after they become more than two years old, a vote of the House is required to comply with any subpoenas for them. The House voted to supply certified copies of any documents ruled as relevant by Chief U.S. District Court Judge George L. Hart Jr.

Conviction of violating the reporting requirement is a misdemeanor punishable by up to one year in jail and a \$1,000 fine.