

SFChronicle
Strauss
JUN 14 1975
Escapes

Prosecution

Washington

The Watergate special prosecutor's office said yesterday it will not prosecute Democratic National Chairman Robert Strauss on charges of accepting an illegal \$50,000 campaign contribution because the statute of limitations has run out.

Strauss was notified of the decision by a letter from the prosecutor's office, thus ending weeks of discussion on whether he would be prosecuted for accepting the contribution from the Ashland Oil Co. in 1971.

When he accepted the \$50,000 from Ashland, he listed it as a miscellaneous donation. Thus there was nothing to show the money came from a corporation.

Federal law forbids corporate contributions in federal elections.

Ashland subsequently pleaded guilty and was fined for making an illegal corporate contribution.

Strauss told a reporter at the time that he may have committed a "technical" violation of the law in listing the contribution as miscellaneous. He insisted, however, that he had been convinced the contribution was legal, that it came from Ashland executives, rather than an illegal contribution from the corporation.

The special prosecutor investigated. But a question arose as to whether the statute of limitations had expired.

The law involved was the 1925 Corrupt Practices Act,

which was replaced by the Federal Elections Campaign Act of 1972.

The new law, however, did not eliminate liability for violations of the old law. But it did reduce the statute of limitations for the old law from five to three years in a number of areas.

The special prosecutor, after consultation with the Justice Department, decided that the Strauss case was one of the areas where the statute of limitations had been reduced.

Los Angeles Times