

2nd Illegal Nixon Gift Told

Washington

Ashland Oil, Inc., and its chairman, Orin E. Atkins, have voluntarily acknowledged an illegal \$100,000 cash contribution to President Nixon's re-election campaign.

The original announcement came from special Watergate prosecutor Archibald Cox and was quickly confirmed by Atkins and the Nixon re-election committee.

Any corporation contribution to a political campaign is illegal under federal law.

According to the committee, the contribution was made before a new law took effect April 7, 1972, requiring public disclosure of all campaign contributions.

Atkins said the contribution was made through a subsidiary and without the knowledge of his board of directors. He termed the contribution "extremely regrettable."

ATTORNEY

In a letter dated July 16, 1973, to the Nixon re-election finance committee, Fred M. Vinson Jr. said he was act-

ing as the attorney for Atkins, his wife and the Ashland Petroleum Gabon Corp., and was notifying the campaign finance organization that the \$100,000 contribution received in the name of Mr. and Mrs. Atkins actually was made from funds of Ashland Petroleum Gabon. Vinson asked that the funds be returned.

The letter concluded, "This will acknowledge that my inquiries have also revealed that the Nixon Finance Committee was not

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informed and had no way of knowing that this contribution originated from a corporate source."

A reply, dated the same day to Vinson from Paul Barrick, treasurer of the finance committee, enclosed a check made out to Ashland Petroleum Gabon for the full amount of the contribution.

The committee had no idea that the contribution had been from corporate

funds, the Barrick letter said.

In a statement issued from his office, the Watergate prosecutor, Archibald Cox, said it appeared that the contribution was solicited by and delivered to Maurice H. Stans, then chairman of the finance arm of the Nixon re-election committee.

Stans is under indictment in New York in connection with a secret cash \$200,000 campaign contribution from New Jersey financier Robert L. Vesco. Stans has pleaded innocent.

Ashland, which has headquarters in Ashland, Ky., was the second major U.S. firm to acknowledge illegal corporate donations to Mr. Nixon.

Two weeks ago, American Airlines confessed that it donated \$55,000 in company funds to the Nixon re-election campaign. At the time, Cox commended the admission and indicated that jail terms and fines may await other corporate officers who fail to admit such gifts.

"When corporate officers come forward voluntarily and early to disclose illegal political contributions to candidates of either party, their voluntary acknowledgement will be considered as a mitigating circumstance in deciding what charges to bring," Cox said in a statement yesterday.

Under federal law, anyone who gives or receives campaign gifts from the treasuries of corporations, labor unions or banks may be imprisoned up to two years and fined up to \$10,000.

In the case of American Airlines, Chairman George A. Spater said Mr. Nixon's personal lawyer and trusted fund raiser, Herbert W. Kalmbach, told him the airline was "among those from whom \$100,000 was expected." The airline got its \$50,000 back from the Nixon committee on July 11.

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