

F.B.I. Is Said to Find No Evidence Of Wrongdoing in Ford '72 Drive

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WASHINGTON, Oct. 1—The Federal Bureau of Investigation has begun preparing a final report on its field investigation of an allegation of campaign financing irregularities involving President Ford and has uncovered no substantial evidence that would support criminal charges, well informed Government sources said today.

According to these sources, the bureau has checked all records, completed all interviews and followed all leads "logically dictated" as necessary to investigate thoroughly the allegation, and in the next several days will finish its report.

One source said that Charles F. Ruff, the Watergate special prosecutor, could ask the bureau to recheck any given aspect of the investigation, but other sources said they doubted he would reopen the field inquiry. Mr. Ruff, they said, presumably would make a statement shortly after reviewing the reports.

Meanwhile, Deputy Attorney General Harold R. Tyler said that he had instigat-

ed the investigation last July 12 when he referred to the special prosecutor what he termed a "very vague" allegation of campaign financing irregularities in the 1972 Presidential elections. He said the allegation had come to him from the F.B.I., which had received it from one of its informants.

In an impromptu news conference, Mr. Tyler said he did not recall that President Ford had been mentioned by name, and

Continued on Page 10, Column 3

Continued From Page 1

he had "absolutely no ... knowledge" that Mr. Ford was the target of the special prosecutor's investigation.

However, he noted that the locale of the allegation was Mr. Ford's Congressional district in Michigan, which surrounds the city of Grand Rapids. "One has to assume when you mention Grand Rapids, you'd think of Gerald Ford," he said.

Other Information

This conflicts with information developed by The New York Times in interviews here and in Grand Rapids in which sources said the special prosecutor's investigation was to determine whether campaign contributions had been illegally and covertly diverted to Mr. Ford through Kent County Republican committees.

Mr. Tyler said that when bureau officials brought the allegation to his attention he discussed the matter with Attorney General Edward H. Levi and then, with Mr. Levi's approval, referred it to Mr. Ruff's office. Mr. Tyler said, "I did not inform Mr. Ford . . . I never told the White House" about the allegation.

He said that he and Mr. Levi were the only two officials in the Department of Justice who knew about the allegation and that he had never termed it "serious" or "significant" in discussions with newsmen.

After he made the initial referral to Mr. Ruff, he said, he never again discussed the investigation with the special prosecutor nor had any knowledge of how it proceeded.

'Automatic Referral'

Mr. Tyler termed the decision to ask Mr. Ruff to investigate the allegation an "automatic referral" because it involved, he said, the 1972 Presidential elections.

"My job is to decide where to send these things and the key words to me were 'Presidential election . . . 1972,'" he said. Under the original charter, the Watergate prosecutor has jurisdiction over all charges of campaign financing illegality in the 1972 Presidential election.

Mr. Tyler, who was nominated as Deputy Attorney General by President

Ford, skirted questions about whether he agreed with Senator Robert F. Dole, the Republican Vice-Presidential candidate, that Mr. Ruff's inquiry was politically motivated.

He said he expected those kinds of charges to be hurled back and forth in an election year, but acknowledged that the fact that he had referred the allegation to Mr. Ruff foreclosed the question of political motivation.

Exchange With Reporter

Mr. Tyler conducted two meetings with the news media today, one an impromptu session in a hallway this morning and the other in his office about 5 P.M. In the later session he had a brief verbal exchange with a Washington Post reporter, Robert Woodward, over what portions of an interview Mr. Woodward had with him on Thursday were "for the record."

Mr. Woodward said at the news conference that Mr. Tyler told him on the record that President Ford had paid too high taxes and he hoped that Mr. Ruff had his tax returns.

Following Mr. Tyler's referral in July, according to authoritative sources familiar with the investigation, the F.B.I. in three field offices—New York, Washington and Grand Rapids—received assignments to conduct interviews or obtain records.

The subpoena for the records of the Kent County Republican Committees arrived the day after Mr. Ford was nominated for a second term. Later, the F.B.I. conducted a series of interviews with Kent County Republican officials in which they asked whether political contributions had been made to the groups and later covertly converted to cash and delivered to Mr. Ford or to "another" third party.

In all cases, according to interviews with Republican officials in Grand Rapids and other sources in Washington, the answer was "no".

Officials of the three Republican groups—the Kent County Committee, the Kent County Finance Committee and the Fifth Congressional District Committee—have said in interviews they believe they will be exonerated of any charges of wrongdoing.