

American Airlines

Washington

American Airlines, saying it paid \$51,000 in illegal campaign contributions in 1971 and 1972, revealed yesterday the recipients included Gerald Ford, Speaker Thomas O'Neill and 67 others who were members of Congress.

Under a law passed in 1973, none of the present or former congressmen could be prosecuted because of a blanket statute of limitations covering contributions for the 1972 campaigns and before.

Others listed by the airline include Transportation Secretary Brock Adams, Representative Udall (Dem-Ariz.), a presidential candidate last year, and Representative

Al Ullman (Dem-Ore.), chairman of the House Ways and Means Committee.

The payments in 1971 and 1972 amounted to about \$51,000 and "were made from a cash fund ... going back to at least 1964 in amounts which are alleged to have totaled at least \$275,000," the airline said.

O'Neill, through a spokesman, said, "I've never knowingly accepted corporate contributions and of course I've never personally accepted a contribution."

A spokesman for Senate GOP leader Howard Baker, also named, said the Airline's chief lobbyist purchased five \$100 tickets to a

Tells of Illegal Campaign Gifts

fund-raiser before the 1972 campaign and that "there was no way for him (Baker) to know it was corporate money."

Most of the congressmen said they had no knowledge the money came from the corporation.

American Airlines identified the recipients in a report to the Securities and Exchange Commission. It has already been fined for making the payments but this is the first time the names of those involved were disclosed.

The airline said its lobbyists used money from a secret cash fund in violation of a federal law that prohibits corporate money

from being spent on U.S. political campaigns. The contributions were in amounts of \$33 to \$1000.

The illegal practice began in 1964 and ended in 1973 when the Watergate special prosecutor charged the company with making an illegal contribution of \$55,000 to President Nixon's re-election campaign.

At the time of the Nixon contribution, the alleged congressional recipients included Representative Peter Rodino (Dem-N.J.), who later chaired the House impeachment proceedings against Nixon, the airline said.

The airline also named Repre-

sentative Harley Staggers (Dem-W.Va.) and Representative John McFall (Dem-Calif.) Staggers chairs the House Commerce Committee that oversees airline matters and McFall heads a subcommittee responsible for airlines.

Staggers said, "I don't recall that they ever contributed to me. I normally send contributions back if I believe there is anything wrong in any way with them."

The payments to members of Congress were carried out most frequently by American Airline's chief lobbyist, James P. Bass.

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