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New Rockefeller Hearings Put Off



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Nelson A. Rockefeller tells reporters in New York of his continued desire for new hearings before Congress.

By Spencer Rich

Washington Post Staff Writer

The Senate Rules Committee yesterday rejected Nelson A. Rockefeller's request for an immediate reopening of his vice-presidential confirmation hearings so he can explain his nearly \$2 million in gifts to politicians and government associates.

Despite strong urging from Sen. Hugh Scott (R-Pa.) and other GOP members of the committee, Rules Chairman Howard W. Cannon (D-Nev.) said the Democratic majority agreed

that the hearings won't be reopened until after the elections.

Cannon said he saw little point in resuming hearings right away, when an audit of Rockefeller's tax returns won't be available until Tuesday and investigative reports on other matters aren't ready.

Rockefeller has asked for a reopening this week, possibly today, to discuss the gifts, which included forgiveness of a loan of \$550,000 to Dr. William J. Ronan, a long-time political associate and chairman of the Port of

New York Authority, a \$50,000 gift to Henry A. Kissinger (in 1969, when Kissinger didn't hold public office), and \$86,312 in forgiveness of an earlier loan to L. Judson Morhouse, one-time New York state GOP chief and public official who was convicted of financial misconduct but pardoned by Rockefeller in 1970 on the grounds that Morhouse was ill.

Rockefeller also wanted to explain a \$60,000 payment by his brother Laurance to finance a critical campaign biography of Arthur J. Goldberg, Rock-

See **ROCKEFELLER, A40, Col. 4**

Rockefeller Request Is Rejected

ROCKEFELLER, From A1
efeller's opponent in the 1970 New York gubernatorial election.

The Rockefeller request for an immediate hearing was designed to counteract a gradual weakening of his support for the vice-presidential nomination. Rockefeller said he was being nibbled to death by leaks out of his tax information sent to Congress and wanted to give his side.

Critics have questioned whether his wealth gave him the capacity to "buy" political influence through loans and gifts, but Rockefeller has said the gifts were intended to keep good men in public life or to absolve the debts of persons like Morhouse who were ill and couldn't pay back loans. He hasn't given a full explanation of the Ronan loan. He has disclaimed any direct involvement in financing the Goldberg book, written by Victor Lasky.

Cannon said the Joint Committee on Internal Revenue Taxation, which has been asked by Cannon and House Judiciary Committee Chairman Peter W. Rodino Jr. (D-N.J.) to go over Rockefeller tax returns for recent years, won't have its report back until Tuesday.

In addition, Cannon said, he is investigating whether a \$50,000 loan to Morhouse (in addition to the \$86,312) was used in an "insider's deal" to purchase stock in a Rockefeller corporation which Morhouse later sold at a substantial profit. This loan, it was reported, was made by Laurance Rockefeller, not Nelson.



By James K. W. Atherton—The Washington Post

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Cannon told reporters, "My own feeling is that he will eventually be confirmed, but I must say I'm not as certain as I was before we started hearings."

Goldberg, it was learned yesterday, asked Senate Majority Leader Mike Mansfield (D-Mont.) last Thursday night to arrange with Cannon for Goldberg to testify on the campaign book. Cannon said yesterday, "Personally, I'm not very much concerned about the Goldberg book. ... The FBI report indicated he [the nominee] wasn't responsible." Rockefeller has said that while he didn't finance the book, he neglected to take positive steps to block it. He has apologized to Goldberg.

The House Judiciary Committee, which must also consider the nomination (it needs majority approval in both chambers), hasn't started its hearings.

Yesterday Scott accused the House committee of "unconscionable delay," leaks and a plan to stretch out the hearings until the next Congress.

Senate Minority Whip Robert P. Griffin (R-Mich.), who joined with Scott in seeking a reopening, said the press had left the impression that he got \$1,000 for his 1972 campaign from the nominee when it was actually from David Rockefeller, chairman of the Chase Manhattan Bank.

The biggest danger to Rockefeller may ultimately lie not with Democrats, but with conservative Republicans who haven't been happy with the nomination and could conceivably use the Rockefeller gifts as an excuse to withdraw their support. So far, conservatives like Jesse Helms (R-N.C.) and William L. Scott (R-Va.) have signaled strong reservations, but there hasn't been any major conservative GOP bolt.