

Mrs. Farkas Gave Most of Gift to Nixon After Election

By CHRISTOPHER LYDON

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WASHINGTON, March 13—Dr. Ruth Lewis Farkas, wife of the founder of Alexander's department stores in New York and President Nixon's choice to be Ambassador to Luxembourg, said today that she gave the bulk of her \$300,000 contribution to the Nixon campaign after the election was over.

Appearing before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, the 66-year-old society woman and philanthropist, who holds a doctorate in sociology, explained that she had delayed payment on her campaign gift, by prearrangement, to await a favorable market for stocks.

She said that the commitment of a contribution, and the President's decision to send her to Luxembourg, were both made long before his re-election last November.

Senator Gale W. McGee, Democrat of Wyoming, presiding at the confirmation hearing this morning said that the delayed payment was "a little unusual" and would "probably delay" the Senate's approval of the nomination.

Public financial records of the Nixon re-election campaign show that \$50,000 was received in Mrs. Farkas's name before the President's landslide victory. More than \$100,000 appeared in December from her and her husband, George, in smaller checks to the numerous Nixon state finance committees. And \$100,000 showed up in \$5,000 checks to different committees in January and February, after the President's re-election committee announced a surplus of nearly \$5-million.

Mrs. Farkas's nomination was formally announced by the White House Feb. 27.



United Press International

Dr. Ruth Lewis Farkas testifying to the Senate Foreign Relations Committee.

All the payments, Mrs. Farkas said today, were a "follow-through" on a pledge that she and her husband made almost a year ago, when President Nixon was making his trips to China and the Soviet Union.

"We were very pleased," she told the Senate committee. "We wanted to help keep Nixon in the White House."

The timing of her delivery "had to do with the stock market," she continued. "We had offered to give to the campaign before, but asked that we be allowed to give it after the first of the year, because we were not liquid at the time. We had to sell some stocks."

The \$300,000 contribution, she said, was a "minimal amount" against the more than \$3-million that she said she and her husband had given to hospitals, universities, museums and other charities.

Delay Not Explained

It was "in August or just before," Mrs. Farkas said, that she heard of the ambassadorial appointment to Luxembourg, once held by Perle Mesta, the

Democratic hostess, and long a prize for generous campaign contributors.

Senator Charles H. Percy, Republican of Illinois, said that the State Department notified the Foreign Relations Committee in a letter dated Aug. 15, 1972, of the President's intention to appoint Mrs. Farkas.

But neither he nor she could explain why the formal announcement had been held up. The promise of a campaign contribution, Mrs. Farkas said, "had nothing to do with getting an ambassadorship or not."

V. John Krehbiel, a California insurance executive nominated to be Ambassador to Finland, told the committee this morning that he gave \$30,000 to the Nixon campaign before the election, "in keeping with what I have been giving over the years."

Accounting Office, President Nixon's re-election campaign received at least \$1.3-million last year from the Administration's past and newly named ambassadors.