

Jersey G.O.P. Club Faces Federal Audit of Spending

Official Says G.A.O. Plans Study Soon of Now-Defunct Executive Group's Campaign Expenditures in 1972

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NEWARK, May 27 — The United States General Accounting Office plans to audit records of the now-defunct Executive Club of the Republican party of New Jersey to see whether errors it made in its formal filing of campaign expenditures last year "were inadvertent or an attempt to mislead."

Robert Higgins, counsel to the Office of Federal Elections within the G.A.O., in an interview from Washington said that the accounting office "had noted recent accounts of the Executive Club expenses" and that "it is one of the political organizations we expect to audit in the near future."

Two apparent errors in the club's report to the accounting office were made in listing the addresses of two groups to which it had given money. They are Political Surveys and Analyses, Inc., and the New Jersey Republican Convention Fund.

149 Members

The addresses of both were given by the Executive Club as 60 Park Place in Newark. Some Republican officials said last week that they did not know of the existence of either group. However, Political Surveys and Analyses later made it known that it had done work for the Republican party and that its office was in Princeton instead of Newark. The address of the convention fund was uncertain.

The Executive Club, to which at least 149 members of the state's business elite contributed \$1,000 a year in dues to support Republicans in New Jersey, has come under the scrutiny of Federal and state investigators looking into Republican party finances in the state. The club, whose chairman was a Mount Holly lawyer, William B. Colsey 3d, reportedly came into existence in April, 1971, and went out of business early this year.

2 Entries Cited

Mr. Colsey originally resisted filing a report with the General Accounting Office, saying that the Executive Club was not primarily a fund-raising political organization. Under G.A.O. pressure he eventually filed a financial report under provisions of the new Federal Campaign Reporting Act, after it became known that the club had made contributions to various committees to reelect the President last year. The club reported \$10,000 in such donations.

Immediate concern to the G.A.O., Mr. Higgins said, were two entries in that file. The first listed a Sept. 8, 1972, payment of \$6,371.65 to the "New

Jersey Republican Fund" to pay for expenses incurred by the New Jersey delegation to the Republican Convention in Miami and the second an Oct. 3, 1972, payment of \$11,000 to "Political Surveys and Analyses Inc." for a statewide candidate-and-issue survey.

Both Unknown

Former Governor Alfred E. Driscoll, newly elected Republican state finance committee chairman, and Assemblyman John H. Ewing of Somerset, committee controller, said last week that they "never heard of" the polling group. A spokesman for State Republican Committee chairman, John Dimon, echoed their comments.

A representative of the owners of the building at 60 Park Place said that neither organization had signed a lease or had been a tenant there.

Subsequently, Political Surveys and Analyses, Inc., did turn up. Its president, Charles W. Roll, said that his group had been in the political polling business for a long time and was located at 53 Bank Street in Princeton. He said he did not know why the concern's address was misstated.

"I'd like to know how that happened," he said, "I'd like to know why it happened."

Order Confirmed

Lewis Thurston, who is executive director of the New Jersey State Senate, confirmed in Trenton that he had ordered the poll by the concern on behalf of the Republican party. When the bill came in "I sent it along to John Dimon," he said.

Mr. Dimon, the state Republican chairman, said last week that "the Executive Club had made offers to us to pick up some of our tabs. When I received the bill I called up Bill Colsey and said, 'Here's your chance to help us out the way you said you wanted to.' He wrote the check."

Asked why he believed Mr. Colsey had listed 60 Park Place as the address for both the survey group and the convention fund, Mr. Dimon said: "I don't know. I've got to assume that Colsey put those addresses down because our finance office is located there."

Did the convention fund exist there, too? Mr. Dimon was asked.

"There was this fund to help pay convention expenses," he replied. "It was here in Trenton, it was also in Newark. It was part of the campaign. Did we have a formal office at 60 Park Place? Well, that's where the finance office is."

Attempts to question Mr. Colsey last week about the erroneous addresses were fruitless.