

Air Route

A Congressman Indicted--'Bribe'

New York

United States Representative Bertram L. Podell of Brooklyn was indicted yesterday on charges of having accepted a \$41,350 bribe to persuade federal agencies a client of his law firm should be granted an air-taxi route between Florida and the Bahamas.

The federal indictment also accused the 47-year-old Democrat of conflict of interest, perjury before a grand jury and making false statements to the FBI.

The congressman, who first assumed his office after a special election in February, 1968, allegedly sought more than \$57,000 from the now-defunct Florida Atlantic Airlines to pressure and attempt to influence officials of the Civil Aeronautics Board, Federal Aviation Administration and State Department.

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But Podell ultimately received \$41,350 for his efforts in 1968, the ten count indictment said. The money was concealed as a donation to the Citizens Committee for the Re-election of Bertram Podell and as legal fees to his family firm, Podell and Podell, it was alleged.

"I consider it a badge of honor to be public enemy number one of the most corrupt administration in the 200-year history of this nation," Podell said in Washington.

"I have the honor of being the first political assassination on the White House list. My indictment and political death is meant to atone for the cesspool of crime and corruption in the Watergate

hearings.

"I am only the first, not the last, congressman whose career is threatened by the corruptors, burglars, wire-tappers, bagmen and psychopaths in and about the White House."

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Podell had announced Sunday that he had documents that showed Justice Department officials two years ago overruled a staff investiga-

tion of pricing practices by the Precision Valve Corp., owned by Robert H. Abplanalp, a friend of President Nixon. Podell claimed at the time a conflict of interest at the Justice Department.

Also indicted and charged with conspiracy and other crimes yesterday were the congressman's brother, Herbert S. Podell, and Martin Miller of Miami, Fla., former president of Florida Atlantic's parent company, Leasing Consultants, Inc.

U.S. Attorney Paul J. Curran said Representative Podell will be arraigned here on July 23. His indictment climaxed a two-year investigation by the FBI and the U.S. attorney's official corruption unit, Curran added.

He said that Podell, besides having sought to influence federal officials, had traveled to the Bahamas in December, 1968, to try to influence officials there.

Federal law provides that a member of Congress cannot receive money for services in a proceeding before any federal agency.

Associated Press



AP Wirephoto

BERTRAM PODELL
Influence peddling charge