

Cox Unit Probing Executives' Gifts

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The Watergate Special Prosecution Force is investigating \$25,000 in contributions to President Nixon's campaign from officials of the American Shipbuilding Co.

The contributions were all made on April 6, 1972, the day before the stiff new federal campaign financing disclosure law went into effect.

Associate Special Prosecutor Thomas F. McBride disclosed yesterday at a hastily called hearing before U. S. District Judge John J. Sirica that the eight company officials listed as having put up the money were "reimbursed by corporate bonuses" on the same day.

Four of the officials had been subpoenaed to appear before a federal grand jury here yesterday, but lawyers for American Shipbuilding protested at the hearing that the men had not been given enough time to hire their own attorneys.

One of the Cleveland company's corporate lawyers, Timothy F. McMahon, added

that McBride had warned them that it would pose "a definite conflict of interest" for company lawyers to represent the individual officials.

The head of the task force investigating suspicious contributions to last year's presidential campaigns, McBride said the \$25,000 is under scrutiny for possible violations of the federal law prohibiting corporate contributions.

His statements were so guarded that he made no mention of which campaign wound up with the money.

However, two of the eight American Shipbuilding executives named at the hearing—Daniel A. Kissell and Roy F. Walker—were listed earlier this year in a partial disclosure of pre-April 7 contributors to the Nixon campaign.

Kissell was recorded as having given \$3,500, and Walker and his wife another \$3,500 for the President's re-election, both on April 6.

The other six officials, it was learned, were listed as having made their contributions on the same day, al-

though records of their donations have not officially come to light.

The six include American Shipbuilding Co. Secretary Robert E. Bartlome, Matthew E. Clark Jr., Ian R. Cushman, Robert L. Dibble, Stanley J. Lepkowski and Gordon Stafford.

All eight have been interviewed by the FBI and, McBride said, each has indicated his willingness to testify before the grand jury. He acknowledged turning down a request by the company's attorneys for a delay in their appearances, but said the postponement was sought only because "officials of American Shipbuilding wished to conduct further investigations of their own into the matter" and because they were worried of "the possible effect on American Shipbuilding's operations."

It was not until yesterday, McBride protested, that the men's desire to hire their own attorneys was raised as a reason for postponement.

Judge Sirica gave them all

two weeks, and ordered them to be ready for the grand jury at 10 a.m. Sept. 19.

American Shipbuilding operates shipyards and plants at Toledo and Lorain, Ohio and Chicago. Attorney McMahon said he has recommended the company's "full cooperation" with the investigation to the point of tying up the board chairman, George M. Steinhilber and the chief executive officer, Campbell W. Elliott, for days "to await interrogatories" by an FBI agent.

Several of the executives subpoenaed before the grand jury, McMahon complained, were not served by U.S. marshals in Ohio until the Labor Day weekend, and two of them were not subpoenaed until Tuesday. He said the process servers showed "a total disregard for how this should be done."

McBride said he knew of nothing improper in the service of the subpoenas, but said he had no objection to giving the eight time to secure their own lawyers.