

Nixon Has Tapes of '71 Talks

Washington

The White House disclosed yesterday that President Nixon's 1971 meeting with dairy industry leaders two days before a controversial increase in milk price supports was tape-recorded.

White House special counsel J. Fred Buzhardt reported that Mr. Nixon has decided to invoke executive privilege to keep the recording secret.

Marking what appeared to be a new first in executive privilege, Buzhardt also invoked it for a White House memo recommending "a presidential photo opportunity with dairy industry leaders" at an earlier meeting.

(A "photo opportunity" is White House press office jargon for a few moments of picture-taking by news photographers during presidential meetings.)

The disclosures were made in connection with a lawsuit charging that the increase in milk price supports was a payoff for early contributions to the President's 1972 re-election campaign.

According to dairy co-op leaders, the 1971 increase in milk price supports added up to \$700 million to the income of dairy farmers.

The increase was ordered by then-Secretary of Agriculture Clifford Hardin two days after the March 23, 1971, meeting at the White House with Mr. Nixon and more than a dozen representatives of three politically active dairy farm co-ops.

Hardin, who also attended the meeting, had ruled less than two weeks earlier that no increase was justified that year.

DUMMY

The three co-ops — Associated Milk Producers, Inc., Mid-America Dairy Men, Inc. and Dairymen, Inc. — donated \$422,500 to Mr. Nixon's campaign, much of it through dummy committees secretly organized on Mr. Nixon's behalf.

U.S. District Judge William B. Jones already has ordered the White House to produce 67 administration memos concerning the dairy industry and the 1971 price increase for his private inspection.

Government lawyers are fighting in the U.S. Court of Appeals here to keep the most sensitive of these documents secret.

The existence of the tape recording of the allegedly crucial White House meeting and still other documents were discovered as a result

of a "continuing search" requested by Ralph Nader's Public Citizen, Inc., and other plaintiffs in the case.

Their attorney, William A.

Dobromir, specifically asked if the meeting had been taped.

In an affidavit submitted to Judge Jones, Buzhardt

said "it is believed that a tape recording was made" although he said he had not listened to it yet. He said Mr. Nixon is claiming privilege for it anyway because of his views about the separation of powers and about the need to keep his conversations confidential.

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