

Labor Union Campaign Gifts Probed

Washington

The Senate Watergate committee has begun investigating presidential campaign contributions controlled by the nation's largest labor unions.

The panel's investigators have sent questionnaires to top officials of more than 80 large unions — those claiming 50,000 or more members.

The questionnaires ask, among other things, whether any funds were illegally donated from union treasuries. Federal law allows individual union members to donate to a central fund controlled by union officers, but prohibits use of union dues in political campaigns.

Accompanying the questionnaires are letters indicating that subpoenas might be used to get the information if it isn't provided voluntarily.

The questionnaires are similar to those sent earlier to the heads of more than 100 large business corporations.

Seven corporations have admitted to special Watergate prosecutor Archibald Cox that they gave illegal donations, totaling \$465,000, to President Nixon's reelection campaign last year.

Committee staff members said that Republican Senators Howard Baker of Tennessee and Edward J. Gurney of Florida pressed strongly for an inquiry into union campaign finances.

The panel, focusing its public attention upon political dirty tricks, resumes its hearings tomorrow. Testimony is tentatively scheduled from two former spies for the Nixon campaign, Michael McMinoway and John Buckley.

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