

# Officials in Illinois Admit to Kickbacks

CHICAGO — Chemical company salesmen operating in every part of Illinois have spent tens of thousands of dollars in gifts and kickbacks to public officials who purchased supplies from them.

An investigation disclosed that officials in 53 of the state's 102 counties admitted they took, or were offered, cash, gift certificates, small and large appliances and other premiums from chemical specialty salesmen who did millions of dollars in business with public officials.

The investigation was conducted by a 25-member task force of reporters from the Illinois staff of the Associated Press, several Illinois newspapers and investigators from the Better Government Association, a Chicago-based citizens' watchdog group which investigates corruption in government.

Almost all the 127 officials interviewed admitted they were offered gifts or were aware that gifts were available from chemical specialty salesmen.

A total of 69 officials, most of them township and road district commissioners, said they had taken gifts and purchased chemicals from the various salesmen.

Records of purchases of chemicals and supplies in 60 of Illinois' 1,500 townships and road districts showed average spending of \$2,700 in 1972. Projected throughout the state, the figures indicate that the chemical sales industry does an estimated \$3 million to \$4 million in business annually in townships alone.

The salesmen also sell to municipalities, counties, schools, hospitals and other tax-supported institutions.

The chemical firms sell weed killer, ice melting chemicals, windshield deicer, cleaners for engine parts, aerosol solvents, road and bridge signs and reflective paint, which sells for as much as \$60 a gallon.



**PEDRO BISSONETTE**  
... "single blast"

normal load for that type of cartridge."

## Watergate Figure

MIAMI—Convicted Watergate burglar Frank Sturgis and two companions have been found innocent of one federal charge of running stolen automobiles to Mexico, but may be tried again on two similar charges. 19 OCT

A federal court jury on Friday cleared the three men of one count of interstate transportation of stolen cars, but was hung on two other counts—one of conspiracy and another of transporting stolen cars across state lines.

Sturgis, Jerry Buchanan and Max Gonzales were indicted by a federal grand jury earlier this year on charges of conspiracy and illegally transporting stolen cars from Florida and Texas across the Mexican border in 1968.

The defense contended the trio had been in Mexico to launch a government-sanctioned invasion of Cuba, but the prosecution charged the Mexican activities were just a coverup for a car theft ring.

## Equity Funding

CHICAGO — Twenty-two persons reportedly have been secretly indicted by a county grand jury in connection with the \$2 billion Equity Funding Life Insurance Co. case. More indictments were reported forthcoming from California.

The Chicago Tribune and The Chicago Sun-Times reported that a Du Page County grand jury returned indictments charging 22 persons with conspiracy to commit fraud in an alleged scheme rated as one of the biggest in financial history. Some 62,400 phony insurance policies were allegedly created to increase the price of Equity Funding on the New York Stock Exchange.

The Tribune said a federal grand jury in Los Angeles is expected to announce indictments in connection with activities of the parent firm, Equity Funding Corp. of America.

From staff reports and news dispatches