

TRUCKERS GAVE \$600,000 TO NIXON

Panel Finds Fund Biggest
in '72 for an Industry

The Washington Star-News

WASHINGTON, Nov. 6—The trucking industry poured more than \$600,000 into the Nixon campaign last year while it was fighting a Government proposal that would have caused more competition in highway shipping.

The trucking money, traced by Senate Watergate investigators, was the largest single-industry gift for the Nixon re-election effort, overshadowing even the huge flow of money from milk producers after a farm price increase.

The donations came from executives of trucking companies across the nation, with officials of the larger lines asked to give \$25,000 a company.

John Ruan of Des Moines, Iowa, secretary of the Washington-based lobby group, the American Trucking Association, was named by Senate investigators as the official who headed the industry fund drive.

Mr. Ruan acknowledged his role when reached for comment last night but said the drive was aimed at defeating the Democratic nominee last year, rather than influencing Government action.

A trucking executive who had personally given \$25,000 denied that there had been any mention of getting Government favors for the contributions.

"If we got something for that money, I'd like to start collecting," said Emerson W. Swan, president of Red Ball Motor Freight, Inc., in Dallas.

Reports Last Fall

All the trucking donations were reported on public record by the Nixon campaign last fall, but there was no identification of them as part of a specific industrywide money

package.

Mr. Ruan, who kept records on the trucking drive, has told Senate investigators that about \$600,000 was delivered. A Senate source said the Nixon campaign headquarters had put the figure from Mr. Ruan at nearly \$700,000.

"It was closer to six," Mr. Ruan said last night.

The money was raised at a series of meetings among trucking executives around the country arranged by Mr. Ruan. It was not raised under the umbrella of the A.T.A., although many givers, like Mr. Ruan and Mr. Swan, are officials or members of the trucking organization.

Among the other concerns whose executives met the \$25,000 goal per company were:

Roadway Express, Akron, Ohio; Consolidated Freightways, San Francisco; Gateway Transportation Company, La Crosse, Wis.; Gordon Transport, Memphis; Lee Way Motor Freight Co., Oklahoma City; Brady Motorfrate, Des Moines, and Scherman Trucking Co., Milwaukee, Wis.

Mr. Ruan gave \$50,000 personally. He is president of the Ruan Transport Corporation of Des Moines, one of the nation's larger lines, with a fleet of roughly 1,000 semitrailers.

The trucking industry is a highly regulated business, with both its routes and its rates set by the Interstate Commerce Commission.

It has been buffeted, however, in the last two years by a fight over whether the regulations that shield it from all-out competition should be relaxed.

The Nixon Administration offered a bill in Congress in 1971 that could have eased rates and allowed more companies to battle for shipping business. The bill died about the time of the donations last fall, although there have been signals that the Department of Transportation might revive part of the proposal this year.