

Conflicts in Testimony About Ford

Washington

Senate Rules Committee Chairman Howard Cannon (Dem-Nev.) said yesterday that closed-door testimony of a witness critical of vice presidential nominee Gerald R. Ford contains "contradictions" and may warrant Justice Department scrutiny for possible perjury.

The panel took private testimony from three witnesses but spent most of the day questioning Robert N. Winter-Berger, a former lobbyist, about allegations he made against Ford in a book, "The Washington Pay Off," and in an affidavit Winter-Berger filed earlier with the committee.

"The committee will review today's transcript (of testimony) and then decide whether to refer it to the Justice Department," Cannon said. He said after the morning session that "there may be a question of perjury."

CLAIM

Cannon said Winter-Berger's affidavit claimed he loaned Ford \$15,000 from his own income on which he had paid taxes. In testimony yesterday, Cannon said, "Mr. Winter-Berger said the loans did not come from his own income and that he had not paid taxes on the money."

"He said 90 per cent of the money he claimed to have loaned Mr. Ford came from Nathan Voloshen and the other 10 per cent was from his own income," Cannon said.

Voloshen, who died in August, 1971, was indicted Jan. 2, 1970, by a New York federal grand jury on charges of conspiring to exert pressure on federal agencies using the office of then House Speaker John McCormack.

AFFIDAVIT

Winter-Berger told newsmen after testifying that "I can't see how I contradicted myself. I stood by everything I said in my affidavit."

Winter-Berger said he did not mention the personal loan, which Ford has denied, in his book because, "I had no documentation to support it."

Asked if he mentioned it in his affidavit because he now had documentation, Winter-Berger said, "No, I still can't document it."

Winter-Berger also alleged in his affidavit that at Ford's request he arranged for contributions totaling \$125,000 to GOP candidates, and that Ford did favors for GOP contributors.

DENIAL

Ford denied the allegations in his public hearings.

Cannon would not say where the contradictions between those allegations and Winter-Berger's testimony yesterday came, but a committee source said the main area of difference centered on the alleged \$15,000 cash loan.

Winter-Berger reportedly now claims it was not his affidavit he gave in amounts of \$50 to \$250 to Ford between 1966 and 1969. He told the committee the money came from another source, but the source was not immediately identified.

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