

Campaign Cash Secrets Revealed

Washington

Officials of two big oil companies told Senate investigators yesterday how they arranged secretly to withdraw cash from foreign subsidiaries in the Bahamas and Gabon in order to make illegal contributions to the Nixon re-election campaign.

Orin E. Atkins, president of Ashland Oil Co., and Claude C. Wild Jr., vice president for governmental affairs of Gulf Oil Corp., said they had been told by Maurice Stans, while he was still Mr. Nixon's Secretary of Commerce, that a contribution of \$100,000 each was expected from all large corporations. Gulf ranked 11th in 1972 among American companies, and Ashland was 70th.

Both men also told the select Senate committee, which is investigating the Watergate burglary and oth-

er political scandals, that they thought they had no option but to respond to the request for campaign funds.

Wild said he feared his company could "be on a black list, low man on the

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telephone pole" he did not respond.

"I just wanted someone to answer my telephone calls once in a while," he continued, adding that there are 61 government agencies that can, in one way or another, "affect Gulf's business."

Atkins, on the other hand, felt that large companies like Gulf "have no difficulty making their points of view heard" in government but that a company the size of Ashland has to contribute money "to assure ourselves of a forum where we would be heard."

Wild said that he arrived at the decision to give \$100,000 to the Nixon campaign in two \$50,000 gifts in 1971 and 1972 "by myself, completely.

METHOD

Once he decided to give the money, he said, he got in touch with William Viglia, who was comptroller of a number of Gulf subsidiaries that were headquartered in the Bahamas and told Viglia to send him the cash.

The same system was also used for a campaign contribution of \$10,000 to the 1972 presidential primary campaign of Senator Henry



AP Wirephoto

ORIN ATKINS
Oil executive

Jackson, (Dem-Wash.) and of \$15,000 to the presidential campaign of Representative Wilbur Mills (Dem-Ark.), he said.

Wild said that he had the authority to get money from Viglia, who, he said charged it to "miscellaneous expense accounts." He indicated that Viglia asked him no questions about the use to be made of the money.

The Senators did not ask Wild any questions about

other uses that were ever made of the cash available through the Bahamas subsidiaries, or who in Gulf gave Wild the authority to order the delivery of large sums of cash through that source.

AUTHORITY

"I had broad authority to handle governmental matters," Wild said.

Wild also indicated that he had previous experience in making campaign contributions, and when asked whether some of them had gone to Democrats replied: "Yes. But the Republicans always cost you twice as much as the Democrats."

Unlike Wild, Atkins said he consulted three other top officials of his company before coming through with the \$100,000 that had been solicited by Secretary Stans.

They were William R. Seaton, the vice chairman of the board of directors, Robert E. Yancey, the president and Clyde Webb, vice president for community affairs.

Atkins said he made the actual decision to give the money, however. He added that if any one of his three colleagues "had objected strenuously, I would probably have re-thought it." But they did not.

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