

Nixon Denies Profit From Public Office

Special to The New York Times

DISNEY WORLD, Fla., Nov. 18—President Nixon told a gathering of newspaper executives here and a nationwide television audience last night that he had "never profited from public service." He added: "I've earned every cent. I'm not a crook."

Responding in detail to a dozen questions in a one-hour appearance before 400 participants in the annual meeting of The Associated Press Managing Editors Association, the President defended himself against charges of wrongdoing and attempted to regain the political offensive after months of torment over Watergate and other scandals.

While Mr. Nixon dealt only briefly with non-Watergate topics, he did express a strong personal distaste for governmental rationing. He would not rule out the possibility that gasoline might be rationed in the months ahead, though he said his Administration's goal would be to "make it not necessary."

He conceded that he had paid only "nominal amounts" of Federal income taxes in 1970 and 1971, mainly because of deductions taken for donating his Vice-Presidential papers to the National Archives.

Mr. Nixon did not dispute a questioner's assertion that he paid only \$792 in Federal income taxes in 1970 and \$878 in 1971, but he said the reason was that he had been able to take large deductions for his gift of the Vice-Presidential papers.

Tax experts later said, however, that the law would have limited such a deduction to 50 per cent of Mr. Nixon's adjusted gross income. So if the President had only his annual \$200,000 salary, he would still have to pay taxes on \$100,000 if the gift of the papers was

his only big deduction. That tax would be \$45,000.

The President's most vivid comment came when he told his audience he was "not a crook"—unusual language for a President, even when under fire.

"I've made my mistakes," he declared, "but in all my years of public life I've never profited from public service. I've earned every cent. I'm not a crook."

On other matters, Mr. Nixon made these points:

¶That Congressional pressure and not promises of campaign contributions from the dairy industry had prompted him to raise milk price supports last year.

¶That the White House tape-recording system had cost only \$2,500 and was just "a little Sony" and some "little lapel mikes in my desk."

¶That a wiretap had been placed on the telephone of his brother, Donald, because foreigners "were trying to get him to use improper influence."

Tepid applause greeted the President's appearance at the Contemporary Hotel at this vast entertainment complex near Orlando. But Mr. Nixon seemed composed throughout the session, faltering perceptibly only during the discussion of his taxes, and the audience responded warmly at the conclusion.