

Fitzsimmons Says Hoffa Lied About Union's Nixon Gifts

By Peter Milius
Washington Post Staff Writer

Teamsters president Frank E. Fitzsimmons yesterday called his predecessor James R. Hoffa "a damned liar" for saying the union gave more than it reported to President Nixon's campaign for re-election last year.

Hoffa, in an interview last week with Newsweek magazine, said he had been told that campaign contributions from officers of the union and from "friends" in Las Vegas who had borrowed from Teamster pension funds totaled \$60,000 to \$70,000.

Newsweek also reported that, in a deposition given in a lawsuit last summer, Hoffa put the total at about \$175,000.

Newsweek said the total of reported contributions from the union was only \$18,000. The Washington Post, in an examination earlier this year of compilations published by the General Accounting Office found a little over \$40,000 in contributions from either Teamster political organizations or officials of the union.

President Nixon, in December, 1971, commuted Hoffa's 13-year prison sentence for jury tampering and fraud, but added a provision barring him from taking part in union af-

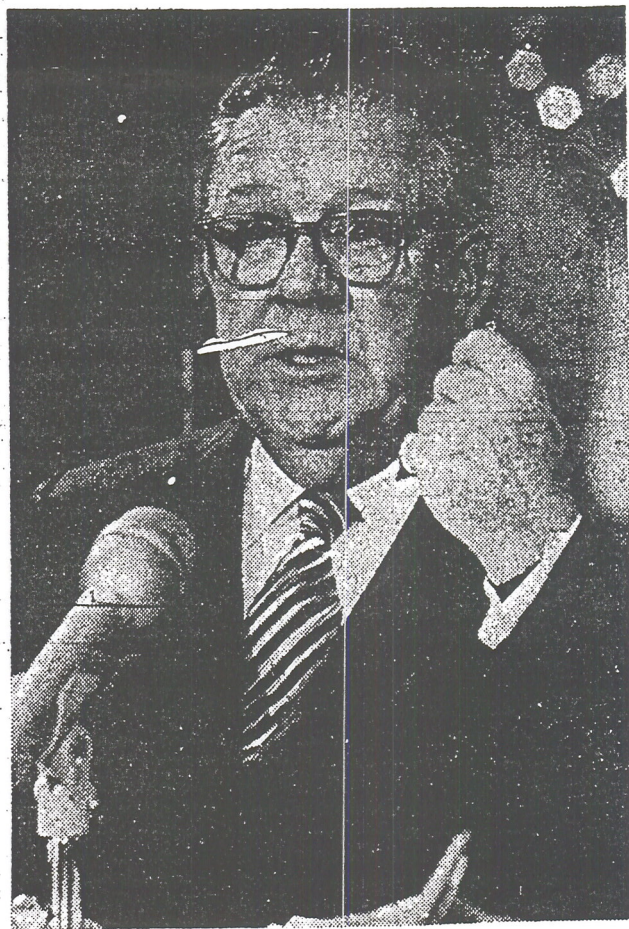
fairs. Hoffa, who would like to run for his old job against Fitzsimmons in the next union election in 1976, is trying in court to get that provision thrown out.

Fitzsimmons, who was once regarded as a stand-in for Hoffa but is now his rival, said Hoffa "has no way of knowing" what the union has or has not done since March, 1967, when Hoffa went to prison.

Asked if all the Teamsters' campaign contributions had been reported, Fitzsimmons answered, "Absolutely. Every quarter." He said that members of the staff of the Senate's Watergate committee questioned him about the matter two or three weeks ago, but that he has heard nothing since.

Fitzsimmons also reiterated his support for Mr. Nixon, saying, "I think he's done a great job for this country," and, "I think he'll come out of this situation he's now in."

He criticized the AFL-CIO for its campaign to persuade the House to impeach the President, saying he sees "no place for labor unions to try to wield power to the extent of changing the will of the American public."



Associated Press

Fitzsimmons on Nixon: "I think he's done a great job."

Fitzsimmons also reiterated at his news conference statements he made in California last week regarding the tug-of-war between the Teamsters and the AFL-CIO's United Farm Workers union over farm workers in the California table-grape fields.

The AFL-CIO said there was an agreement that the Teamsters would give jurisdiction over the field hands back to the United Farm Workers.

Fitzsimmons said the Teamsters are not backing off, and that there never was an agreement.

He added that the farm workers freely chose his union over the United Farm Workers, headed by Cesar Chavez.

"I resent the statements of George Meany," president of the AFL-CIO, "that the United Farm Workers are 'the only legitimate organization representing farm workers,'" Fitzsimmons said.