

Milk Men's Aid to Nixon

--New Memo

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H.R. Haldeman, former White House chief of staff, was advised by a deputy in 1971 that dairy industry officials were expected to pay \$90,000 per month toward President Nixon's re-election campaign, according to federal court papers.

The monthly "commitment" figure was contained in a Sept. 11, 1971, memo to Haldeman from Gordon C. Strachan, an attorney who served as his liaison with Mr. Nixon's campaign organization. Strachan wrote the memo six months after the President had raised dairy industry price supports.

This memo and two others became available yesterday as part of a consumer lawsuit that has been filed against dairy interests by Ralph Nader and other plaintiffs. The documents conflict with an impression that the White House and some dairy officials have sought to give.

In a white paper released last month, the White House said financial support by milk producers was not a factor in Mr. Nixon's decision to raise government milk price supports in March, 1971, although this action occurred after the first of an eventual \$427,500 from dairy interests flowed into the Nixon campaign.

Earlier this month, Patrick J. Hillings, a former California Republican congressman who served as an attorney for dairy officials, said an industry pledge of \$2 million for Mr. Nixon's campaign was a figure "pulled out of the air."

Hillings had said there was "no commitment, no quid pro quo" when he wrote the President about this intended campaign support in December, 1970.

The Strachan memo, entitled "milk money," said: "Lee Nunn reports that

\$232,500 has been realized. This is slightly more than one - half of the amount that should have been delivered on the commitment \$90,000 per month."

Nunn was a campaign fund-raiser.

Strachan's Washington at-

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torney, John M. Bray, said he could not explain the reference to "\$90,000 per month" except that Strachan "only relayed information to Haldeman that other people had given him. Strachan, so far as I know, never talked directly to any dairy officials."

The \$2 million figure would translate to about \$90,000 per month if spread over a two - year period, such as 1970 to 1972, Bray acknowledged. Strachan could not be reached for comment.

Hillings, contacted yesterday, said reference to a monthly payment was "unrealistic," adding: "That never came up in any discussion I ever had."

Court records show Strachan wrote another memo a few days later — Sept. 16, 1971 — to advise Haldeman that Charles W. Colson, then a top White House aide, was raising cash from dairy interests for an unidentified project.

"You asked me to check Colson regarding an independent agreement with the milk people for Colson to get cash," Strachan wrote.

"Colson confirmed that he had made a separate arrangement to obtain five thousand. This money was committed by (then presidential assistant John D.) Ehrlichman but never delivered in connection with a

'project we — Colson and Ehrlichman — worked on together.'" (Strachan apparently was quoting Colson's words here.)

It previously was revealed that the break-in by the White House "plumbers" squad in September, 1971, at the office of Daniel Ellsberg's psychiatrist was financed by \$5000 in dairy contributions — without the knowledge of dairy officials.

It could not be learned, however, what project the memo referred to. Colson relayed word through his secretary that he was too busy to discuss Strachan's memo.

A third Strachan memo in the court file — dated Feb. 1, 1972 — advised Haldeman that dairy officials "have cut the original 2000 commitment back to 1000."

Strachan, in testifying last summer before the senate watergate committee, said he routinely left off the final three zeros in dealing with million-dollar figures. Thus, his memo meant the \$2 million figure had been reduced to \$1 million — which was still more than twice what was finally contributed.

In the same memo, Strachan said then Attorney General John N. Mitchell believed that Nixon fundraiser Herbert W. Kalmbach "should continue to handle the milk project, but Kalmbach wants your advice."

Haldeman wrote in hand at the bottom. "I'll disc. w. AG." — meaning he would discuss it with Mitchell.

The memo reinforced the picture of Mitchell as being involved in the President's re-election strategy while still attorney general — despite Mitchell's testimony to the contrary a month later to the Senate Judiciary Committee.

In a separate brief filed with the court, Nader attorney William A. Dobrovir said David Wilson, a presidential aide, had written other administration officials that the protracted consumer lawsuit could be "disastrous" for the White House.

Dobrovir said Wilson had filed a report with Haldeman, Ehrlichman and Mitchell on Feb. 1, 1972, that said in part: "Aside from the ultimate decision in this case, the discovery proceedings could prove disastrous."

Discovery proceedings refer to the rights of opposing attorneys to obtain documents and testimony with court approval. Dobrovir said he attempted to obtain a complete sworn statement from Wilson last December 11, but that Wilson refused to explain what he meant by his "disastrous" remark.

U.S. District Judge William B. Jones has agreed to rule on whether Wilson would have to answer this question and nine others he remained silent on.

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