

White House Tie To Milk Probe

Washington

Newly disclosed documents show that Charles W. Colson raised an alarm at the White House about a 1971 Justice Department investigation of a dairy cooperative that was donating funds for President Nixon's re-election campaign.

Colson said the antitrust investigation could have "very serious adverse consequences." The investigation later was shifted from the criminal to the civil division of the Justice Department.

The documents also show that John W. Dean III, then the President's official lawyer, followed the progress of the antitrust investigation and prepared a report on it.

And the documents raise the possibility that White House chief of staff H. R. Haldeman discussed the investigation with Attorney General John N. Mitchell.

The documents, released yesterday in connection with a Ralph Nader lawsuit, are the first indication that

White House officials took an active interest in the controversial antitrust case.

Previously it had been disclosed that Mitchell turned down repeated requests Richard W. McLaren, to start a federal grand jury from his antitrust chief, investigation of allegedly illegal monopoly tactics used by the Associated Milk Producers, Inc. A civil suit was filed instead.

McLaren's first request for a grand jury was sent to Mitchell Sept. 9, 1971, according to the former antitrust chief's sworn affidavit. Fifteen days later Colson, then special counsel to the President, alerted Haldeman to the matter.

"If this goes too far there will be a number of very serious adverse consequences which I will be glad to elaborate on in detail," Colson said.

"I do think this should be taken up at one of your meetings. I would like to stay out of it."

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