

Nixon Deductions For Gas Challenged

Washington

Congressional investigators and the Internal Revenue Service have challenged as seriously inflated, and for some years possibly fictitious, the deductions for California gasoline taxes that President Nixon has taken on his Federal tax return, well-placed sources said yesterday.

The deductions, totaling \$244, saved the President \$78.51 in Federal income taxes from 1969 through 1972.

Mr. Nixon was President throughout this period, except for the first 19 days of 1969, and his automobile travel and that of his family was in government-owned vehicles that were fueled at government expense.

Mr. Nixon's tax accountant, Arthur Blech of Los Angeles, is known to have told revenue agents and investigators from the Congressional Joint Committee on Internal Revenue Taxation that the deductions reflect gasoline that was purchased to operate a truck on the grounds of Mr. Nixon's house in San Clemente, Calif.

The investigators are reportedly skeptical about the explanation, though neither the joint committee nor the revenue service has yet

reached any formal conclusions as to the legality of the gasoline tax deductions or any of the other controversial claims made by Mr. Nixon to reduce his Federal income taxes. Mr. Nixon made public last December 8 his tax returns for his first four years in office.

New York Times