

3 Milk Co-ops Build Campaign Fund

By Morton Mintz

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The three dairy cooperatives that gave \$427,500 to President Nixon's re-election campaign have been adding to their political treasuries at the rate of \$2,200 a day in the first two months of this year.

The cash balances stood at \$2,013,364 at the end of February, a new study shows.

That was \$130,138 above the year-end total of \$1,883,226. Presumably the money will be used in the 1974 congressional elections and 1976 presidential election.

The data on the co-ops is in an analysis by the Center for Public Financing of Elections of reports filed with the clerk

of the House and the secretary of the Senate.

The bipartisan lobbying group said that candidates for the Senate and their political committees already have more than \$5 million available for the fall elections and for future elections. The only nonincumbent who listed substantial cash on hand was Mayor Richard Lugar of Indianapolis, who is seeking the Republican nomination for senator from Indiana. He listed \$167,655.

The political committee reporting the largest amount of cash on hand as of Feb. 28, \$1,400,163, was C-TAPE, the political arm of Associated Milk Producers, Inc., of San Antonio, Tex., which systematically assesses its members.

The amount represented an increase over the Dec. 31 balance of \$74,755.

The Dairymen, Inc. political unit, SPACE, listed \$334,427, up \$27,470, and Mid-America Dairymen's ADEPT \$278,774, up \$27,913.

The co-ops have not said how much of their cash they plan to contribute, and to whom, in the 1974 elections.

In the 1972 elections, in addition to giving \$427,500 for President Nixon, they gave varying amounts to hundreds of Democratic and Republican candidates for the House and Senate, to gubernatorial and state legislature candidates, to campaign committees on Capitol Hill, and to some candi-

dates for the Democratic presidential nomination.

The co-ops' activities in the 1972 presidential contests are currently under investigation by a special Watergate grand jury. In addition, antitrust suits have been brought against each of them by the Justice Department.

The Center for Public Financing of Elections, which seeks to limit the amounts that can be spent on federal campaigns, said that more than 100 registered political committees' reports for the first two months of the year were unavailable as of March 19, although the filing deadline was March 10.