

Mills Reportedly Got Milk Money

Washington

Representative Wilbur D. Mills' brief Democratic presidential campaign got early financial support in corporate contributions from the nation's largest dairy cooperative, according to a report on the dairy group's political dealings.

Federal law prohibits the use of corporation funds for political contributions.

The financial support came in the last months of 1971 and the early weeks of 1972, before Mills announced he was a candidate for the Democratic nomination.

The new allegations are contained in a report by Edward L. Wright of Little Rock, Ark., a former president of the American Bar Association. It was commissioned by the milk producers' board of directors after reports began to surface of illegal campaign donations by former officials of the organization.

The report, obtained from court records, says two top workers in the Mills campaign were paid in corporate funds from the Texas-based Associated Milk Producers, Inc.

The cooperative also paid rent for the Washington apartments of the campaigners, as well as rent for their leased furniture, the report said.

The report didn't estimate the amount of money the cooperative paid in corporate salaries for work done for Mills. Its rental payments totaled \$5410.78.

In Kensett, Ark., Mills said Saturday, "I know of no AMPI corporate fund that came in at all."

Concerning the report's statement that the cooperative also paid rent for the Washington apartments of the campaigners as well as

rent for their leased furniture, Mills said, "I know nothing about that either. That was not in my campaign; that was in the Draft Mills campaign."

He said he was referring to the Draft Mills Committee, which, he said, was separate from his own campaign.

Mills, chairman of the House Ways and Means committee, said he doubted that any illegal milk co-op funds were made even to the Draft Mills Committee because by that time, he said, AMPI had set up a committee so that political contributions could be made legally.

The Associated Press also confirmed independently that cooperative officials drawing corporate salaries took over the organization and financing of a 1971 gathering of farmers in Ames, Iowa, at which Mills was the featured speaker in a lineup that also included top Iowa Republicans.

Last year an official of Gulf Oil Corp. pleaded guilty to federal charges of donating

\$15,000 in company funds to Mills' presidential effort. Mills later refunded the money from his personal bank account.

Also, a former official of the milk producers cooperative, Bob A. Lilly, has been quoted as saying he relayed \$5000 in company funds, which he was told was for Mills. Mills said through the spokesman he knows nothing of such a contribution.

The co-op board has furnished copies of the report to the Watergate special prosecution force and to the Senate Watergate committee. The Wright report quotes one of Mills' former campaigners, Betty Clement Bullock, as saying David L. Parr, one of the milk producers' top officials and a longtime backer of Mills, sent her to work at the Mills presidential headquarters in

Little Rock on July 1, 1971.

She later worked on the Ames rally on Oct. 2, 1971, and joined the Mills campaign in Washington. Her \$750-a-month salary was paid by the milk producers through a third party, the report says. The cooperative reimbursed her directly for the \$290 per month rental on her Washington apartment and the \$77.80 monthly rental on her leased furniture, according to an audit of company records.

The report also said that Joe P. Johnson, an official of the milk producers who acted as a campaign advance man, received his salary from the cooperative's corporate account while working for Mills.

According to a White House statement issued late last year, Mills actively intervened with the administration in early 1971 to lobby for an increase in milk price supports, which President Nixon eventually ordered.

Associated Press