

Dairy Plan for '72 Mills Fund

Washington

A top official of the nation's largest dairy cooperative planned to raise \$2 million to elect Representative Wilbur D. Mills president in 1972, according to statements filed in court.

They say David L. Parr, once the second-ranking official of Associated Milk Producers, Inc., believed Mills could capture the Democratic presidential nomination and beat President Nixon, who was also receiving substantial support from the milk producers.

According to the statements, attributed to several of Parr's former associates at the cooperative, Parr assigned from five to seven salaried employees of the cooperative to assist the Mills presidential effort, an apparent violation of federal laws prohibiting indirect donations of corporation money for political purposes.

"Dave Parr wanted to build a kitty for Wilbur Mills of \$2 million," the cooperative's former lobbyist Bob A. Lilly was quoted as saying. "He wanted this to be in cash."

The sum of \$2 million also had been promised by Parr and other cooperative officials to President Nixon's re-election campaign. The House Judiciary Committee is investigating whether this promise of money influenced the President's decision to overrule the Agriculture Department and raise milk price supports in 1971.

The milk producers, who currently hold the richest political trust in the country, frequently have given to both the Republican and Democratic candidates in election races, and sometimes have donated to competing candidates in the same primary election.

The new statements about the milk producers' support for Mills are contained in the files of Edward L. Wright, a former president of the American Bar Association who investigated the cooperative's political activities for the group's board of directors. Wright's investigative notes were subpoenaed by the Justice Department antitrust division and made public in court proceedings.

Although nothing like \$2 million was put into Mills' abortive campaign, the milk producers and two sister dairy cooperatives accounted for more than one-fifth of the recorded contributions to Mills. The milk producers' donation of \$25,000 is the largest single recorded gift to the campaign.

In addition, the milk producers poured at least \$50,000 worth of corporate support, not counting employee salaries, into the early part of Mills' campaign, at a time when he said he was not an active candidate.

Mills has disclaimed knowledge of, or responsibility for, the dairymen's corporate aid.

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