

Mills Aides Questioned On Links With Milk Fund

Associated Press

A Watergate grand jury has questioned three current and former aides to Rep. Wilbur D. Mills about milk-fund money used in the Arkansas Democrat's brief 1972 presidential campaign.

In recent weeks the Watergate prosecutors have summoned Mills' administrative assistant, Oscar Eugene Goss, and two former campaign officials, Charles Ward of Conway, Ark., and Betty Clement Bullock of Little Rock.

Goss said he appeared voluntarily, without a subpoena, and was questioned about links between the Mills campaign and Associated Milk Producers, Inc., the big dairy cooperative that recently pleaded guilty to donating \$5,000 illegally to Mills.

Goss said the questions concerned the \$5,000 cash gift, which allegedly passed through his hands, and the use of corporate money by the co-op to pay salaries and expenses of Mills campaign workers. Use of corporate money in federal election campaigns is prohibited by law.

Mills, reached by telephone at his suburban Virginia home, said he has not been called to testify by prosecutors. Earlier this year, Mills declined two requests by the now-disbanded Senate Watergate committee to appear for questioning.

Mills, asked for comment on

the summoning of Goss and the other witnesses, said only: "I don't know anything about it. I just know they've been up there, that's all."

Mrs. Bullock, who received a subpoena, confirmed in a telephone interview that she had been questioned for about two hours last Tuesday. But she added: "I'd just rather not comment on it."

According to Watergate committee testimony, Mrs. Bullock worked as a secretary for the Mills campaign for several months while receiving salary and expenses from the corporate funds of the milk producers' co-op.

Ward, who headed the early "draft-Mills" efforts in 1971 and early 1972, was not immediately available for comment.

Concerning the \$5,000 cash gift, Goss said he had testified that he has "no independent recollection" of having handled the money.

He said he testified that if he had received such a gift, he might have failed to ask whether it came from corporate funds, because he knew that the milk producers had a legal political trust for making donations to candidates.

Goss said he was questioned about Mrs. Bullock and two other campaign workers, Joe P. Johnson and Terry Shea, who allegedly were paid corporate salaries by the dairy-men while working on the Mills campaign.

Johnson, who worked as Mills' traveling campaign aide and who succeeded Ward as campaign manager, declined to testify about the matter to the Watergate committee earlier this year on grounds of possible self-incrimination. Goss said he had testified that he was unaware of who was paying salaries for Johnson, Shea and Mrs. Bullock.

This conflicts with testimony given to the Watergate committee by David L. Parr, former special counsel for the milk producers. Parr said he believed Goss was aware of the co-op's payment of salaries. "I am sure they knew it. We didn't try to hide it," Parr testified.

Parr pleaded guilty on July 23 to charges including donation of \$5,000 in corporate money to the Mills campaign, a gift he said he had sent to Goss. Parr is awaiting sentencing. The co-op itself also pleaded guilty to similar charges and was fined the maximum \$35,000.