

Rocky's Family Helped Nixon

Washington

The House Judiciary Committee plans to investigate whether there was any connection between a large Rockefeller family contribution to President Nixon's 1972 campaign and Mr. Nixon's reversal of a ruling by the Civil Aeronautics Board against Eastern Airlines, according to committee sources.

Mr. Nixon reversed two CAB rulings and allowed Eastern to acquire Caribair, a Puerto Rican-based airline, less than a year after the Rockefeller family contributed \$200,000 to the Nixon campaign. The Rockefellers have large interests in Eastern.

The committee inquiry is in connection with President Ford's nomination of Nelson A. Rockefeller as vice president.

There appeared to be no evidence at this point of a connection between the Rockefeller contribution and the Nixon ruling. But committee sources said the timing of the events raised questions in the minds of some members.

The sources said the matter would be studied as part of an expansion of the inquiry into the Rockefeller nomination to include members of the Rockefeller family and their influence on governmental agencies and policy.

Hugh Morrow, Rockefeller's press secretary, said in response to an inquiry that the former New York governor owned no stock in Eastern Airlines.

"Nelson Rockefeller did not discuss this matter with anybody," Morrow said.

However, Rockefeller's brother Laurance is the single largest stockholder in Eastern Airlines, according to a study of the Rockefellers published in 1972 by Professor James C. Knowles of the University of Southern California.

tan Bank, the Rockefeller family bank, holds 6.1 per cent of Eastern Airlines stock in trust and is the prime lender of a \$300-million loan to the airline.

Whitney Gilliland, vice chairman of the CAB and one of those who voted with the minority in the two 3-to-2 decisions against Eastern, said that during the commission's deliberations "there was no discussion of Rockefeller involvement."

Nonetheless, the Judiciary Committee plans to investigate the Eastern case and any other regulatory rulings — none are yet known — that may have favored the Rockefellers, committee sources said yesterday.

The \$200,000 campaign contribution was made prior to April, 1972, when disclosure was not required. The funds were contributed in \$50,000 donations by Nelson, his brothers Laurence and John, and his sister Abby R. Mauze. Later that year, Nelson Rockefeller contributed an additional \$2000 to the Nixon campaign, and this latter amount was reported at that time.

Eastern Airline's efforts to acquire Caribair date back to 1970, when Eastern provided management and financial assistance to Caribair pending its proposal for acquisition.

The CAB twice denied approval for the acquisition. The first disapproval came in the fall of 1972, when Mr. Nixon remanded the matter back to the CAB for reconsideration. The second disapproval came in February, 1973.

On April 12, 1973, then-President Nixon cited "foreign policy reasons" as he overruled the CAB and approved the acquisition. The President has the authority, under law, to determine overseas routes and acquisitions, in connection with his conduct of foreign policy.

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