

Democratic Finance Files Subpoenaed

Washington

The Watergate special prosecution force has subpoenaed finance reports of the Democratic party for 1970 and 1971 in a grand jury investigation into possible violation of a campaign reporting law.

Democratic National Committee Chairman Robert Strauss and a spokesman for the Watergate prosecutors declined comment yesterday on the investigation.

The subpoenaed reports cover the period in which Strauss, who was then party treasurer, accepted a \$50,000 cash gift from Ashland Oil, Inc.

The oil company admitted last year that the money was an illegal corporate donation.

Strauss has said he was unaware of the illegal nature of the gift.

He also has said he did not disclose the identity of the donor in public reports that he filed at the time, and that he lumped the donation under unitemized miscellaneous contributions.

The Corrupt Practices Act, which was in force at the time, required that political committees operating in two or more states publicly disclose the names and addresses of all donors of \$100 or more.

Strauss has said he believed the \$50,000 gift had come originally from many donors, each of whom gave less than \$100, and so he did not feel obliged to report the source.

No further prosecution can be brought for the illegal \$50,000 gift itself because on January 1 a new law shortened the statute of limitations on such matters from five years to three. Ashland said the gift was made before February, 1972.

However, cases may still be prosecuted if violations of the reporting requirements of the Corrupt Practices Act occurred within the last five years.

Associated Press