

Teamsters, Nixon Aide Deny Payoff

Washington

Teamsters president Frank Fitzsimmons and a spokesman for Richard Nixon denied yesterday a published report that the union gave the Nixon administration \$1 million to keep James Hoffa from returning to power.

Time magazine reported that the Justice Department is investigating such a payoff.

In separate statements issued in Washington and in San Clemente, Fitzsimmons and a Nixon aide, Jack Brennan, rejected any such allegations.

Fitzsimmons, who succeeded Hoffa as Teamsters president, challenged Attorney General Griffin Bell to "confront me with the source of these allegations or any evidence in this regard."

Brennan, in a written state-

Back Page Col. 4

From Page 1

ment read to reporters in San Clemente, said, "The story that \$1 million was paid by the Teamsters to someone in the White House is totally false."

The Time story said the Justice Department investigation involved charges that the money was given to the White House in return for Nixon's proviso, in commuting Hoffa's prison sentence in 1971, that Hoffa not be allowed to seek a return to any Teamster office until 1980.

At the time of Nixon's commutation, Hoffa was serving 13 years for jury tampering and mail fraud.

Hoffa has been missing since June 30, 1975, and investigators have expressed belief he was killed by the underworld.

The Time report also suggested that former White House counsel Charles Colson was a middleman in the transaction.

"This story is scurrilous and patently untrue," said a spokesman for Colson.

The spokesman confirmed that Colson was interviewed by government investigators as early as 1973 about these and similar charges relating to the Hoffa sentence commutation.

Fitzsimmons said in his statement, "There is not a modicum of truth in the allegations that I paid one cent to the Nixon administration to bar Hoffa from union office.

"The credibility of such allegations falls flat on its face because all such stories can only quote 'usually reliable sources' or 'undisclosed sources' or 'an unnamed FBI official' or 'a secret FBI report' or other loose attribution to such allegations which are absolutely false."

The statement from Brennan, now Nixon's top aide, said:

"The story that \$1 million was paid by the Teamsters to someone in the White House is totally false. It's just as false as the forged love letters story, the foreign bank account story, and all the other fictitious articles and stories that have been written in attempts to smear former President Nixon.

"There have been false, unsubstantiated and libelous stories. They always emanate from unnamed sources, informants, and alleged secret reports. If the Justice Department is considering questioning former President Nixon, tell them to stop considering and just do it.

"This story is absolutely false. I am calling our attorneys to ask if they can find a way to file suit."

United Press