

President Ford is a friend of large corporations

WASHINGTON (CUPI) - A number of President Gerald Ford's closest friends are lobbyists for some of the biggest corporations in the United States.

One former lobbyist, Robert Winter-Berger, gave evidence before the House Judiciary Committee's hearings when Ford was nominated to be Vice President in October, 1973. The evidence presented indicated how friendships could develop between politician Ford and the lobbyists.

Winter-Berger testified that he had personally paid Ford \$15,000 for various favours over a five year period and, in return for still more favours, had channelled \$125,000 to finance Republican Party campaigns at the request of Ford.

Before testifying to the House committee, Winter-Berger had detailed his accusations against Ford in a signed affidavit which was used as the basis of an October 1973 newspaper article dealing with Ford's openness to political payoffs.

This affidavit, in addition to the Washington Payoff, was submitted as evidence to the Judiciary Committee. The House at that time wanted a replacement for Spiro Agnew, aware of the fact that the person chosen might someday have to replace Richard Nixon. Ford, as a 25-year veteran of the House was "one of their own" and, as a result, most of the time questioning Winter-Berger was spent trying to discredit his testimony against Ford.

Winter-Berger explained, though, that a man named Nathan Voloshen gave him most of the \$15,000 which he passed on to Ford. Voloshen, in return, would have an "in" with the then House minority leader. "What Nathan Voloshen was doing," said Winter-Berger, "was buying what he thought was an ear at court...There was a lot in it for him...if Jerry Ford became Speaker of the House, and if I knew Jerry Ford."

Another particularly interesting case involved a Dutch doctor,

Alfred Buytendorp, who purchased Winter-Berger's assistance \$2,000 for his services and between February and May, 1968, Ford and Winter-Berger were in almost constant communication on the matter.

Winter-Berger submitted to the Judiciary Committee a dozen letters written to him by Ford, explaining the activities Ford was involved in on behalf of Buytendorp. At that time Ford sent a letter to Winter-Berger, dated May 20, 1968, saying, "You will be relieved, I know, and I am delighted that all went well after the General Consul had his personal attention called to the case."

Ford added, "It has been a pleasure for me to get this worked out for you. It's really been like a game of chess, hasn't it?" The letter was signed, "Warmest personal regards, Jerry."

Since all the payments to Ford were made in cash there were no records that he had received

money from Winter-Berger, though there was documented evidence that he had intervened in the Buytendorp case. The Judiciary Committee, perhaps sensitive to its own relationships with Washington lobbyists, attacked Winter-Berger's lack of documentation. With it being his word against that of Gerald Ford, the 38 people on the Judiciary Committee were more than willing to accept the word of "one of their own."

Ford still numbers among his friends the lobbyists and executives of such companies as Ford Motor Company, Proctor and Gamble, and United States Steel.

Another important Ford Friend in business is from his home town of Grand Rapids, Michigan, and is already working on the White House staff. Philip W. Buchen has been named White House counsel. Before being hired by Ford, Buchen was a partner in the law firm of Law, Buchen, Wehlers,

Richardson and Dutcher. Among the firm's clients are Brunswick Corporation, the Chesapeake and Ohio Railway Company and Ford Motor Company and United States Steel.

Stark Ritchie, Chief General Counsel of the American Petroleum Institute and John F. Mills of the Tobacco Institute Inc., are others considered to have a direct line to Ford's ear.

Even before Ford took office, William G. Whyte, Vice-President of United States Steel and the company's top man in Washington, hosted a "Presidential transition" party at his home. Among the guests were Philip W. Buchen and Bryce N. Harlow of Proctor and Gamble.

Commenting on the extraordinary number of Ford's lobbyist friends, one corporate executive said, "There are probably 1,000 guys who would say they are Jerry Ford's friend."

Views sought on grass

REGINA (CUP) - The University of Regina Students' Union (SU) executive will be seeking the views of students on the use of marijuana and related drugs as a result of a visit by Vic Pankratz, a Regina RCMP narcotics squad member.

Pankratz demanded a statement on the use of narcotics from SU President Marv Mochoruk during an August 9 meeting.

Record banned

OKLAHOMA (CUPI) - It's not often that a rock-oriented radio station bans the number one single in the United States, but Bill Payne, station manager for KWHP in Edmond, Oklahoma, has done just that.

Payne has forbidden his disc jockies to air Eric Clapton's "I Shot the Sheriff". The reason, explains Payne, is that the lyrics of the song celebrate a senseless violence which is pervading society.

In the song Clapton sings that he shot the sheriff, but did not kill the deputy. Payne claims that the character in the song "shot the sheriff because the sheriff burned down his marijuana patch. He said it was self-defense."

Added Payne, "Now that's senseless."

Pankratz expressed concern throughout the meeting over the lack of control faced by the narcotics squad in dealing with the university dope trade.

He appears to be acting independently of the RCMP and the Saskatchewan Solicitor General's department.

The RCMP does not have jurisdiction over Wascana Center Authority grounds which includes the university. University President John Archer must also approve any raids by the narcotics squad.

SU officials have decided to approach Pankratz's request by going directly to the students. A referendum to coincide with Fall SU by-elections will likely be held to determine an official position which can be presented to various authorities.

Students previously approved a referendum supporting the legalization of marijuana. The referendum was held while the Le Dain Commission hearings on the non-medical use of drugs were in progress.

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