

Former aide to Nixon denies selling jobs

WASHINGTON (UPI) — Former Nixon aide Peter Flanigan yesterday denied he ever engaged in selling ambassadorships but acknowledged that the White House promised to sponsor large campaign contributors for specific jobs.

Flanigan, whose nomination as ambassador to Spain was strongly opposed by Sen. Thomas Eagleton, D-Mo., told the Senate Foreign Relations Committee during his confirmation hearing that he urged Herbert Kalmbach to approach Ruth Farkas for a large contribution in 1972, a presidential election year.

Farkas, who gave the Nixon campaign \$250,000, now is Ambassador to Luxembourg. Kalmbach is in prison on charges of corrupt practices in campaign financing.

"I deny the implication that there was a commitment to exchange an ambassadorship for a large contribution by Mrs. Farkas," Flanigan said.

But he acknowledged he was aware of campaign funding practices.

"I do know of instances where people said we will make a contribution or a larger contribution if you will agree to a job," he testified. "And in each instance the answer was, that I know of, we will certainly put your name forward, we will

sponsor you for consideration, and no more than that."

"It's Kalmbach who is in the penitentiary for selling ambassadorships and it's Flanigan who presumably will go to a post in Europe," said Eagleton. "That is not equal justice."

Eagleton, urging the committee to kill Flanigan's carryover appointment by Nixon, said Farkas had donated \$250,000, then turned down an offer for an ambassadorship to Costa Rica.

Mrs. Farkas told the Nixon administration "she didn't want to pay \$250,000 for a banana republic," Eagleton said. "She wanted something in Europe, she wanted something better."

Flanigan denied a series of accusations by Eagleton of improper actions, including influencing government agencies on behalf of various corporations. He said all his actions were taken in the national interest.

"The evidence is strong that Peter Flanigan was the key man in Washington. He was the man who, in several known cases, paved the way with the agencies of government," Eagleton said.

"I have never been a fund raiser," Flanigan said. "That doesn't mean that I did not solicit from particular friends of mine."

To be refunded in income tax return

Sawhill proposes gasoline tax

WASHINGTON (UPI) — Federal energy chief John Sawhill disclosed yesterday he had proposed to the White House that gasoline consumption be reduced by imposing a tax that would later be refunded by the Internal Revenue Service.

He said he suggested to President Ford's advisers that the "refundable fee" be set at 20 to 30 cents a gallon with the motorist filing for a refund through his income tax returns.

"The refund would have to come through the withholding system although other mechanisms would have to be found to refund to people who are not part of the tax system; that is those who don't pay income tax," said the head of the Federal Energy Administration.

"In order to really be effective a fee would have to be somewhere in the 20 to 30 cents a gallon range."

As an example, Sawhill said that if a motorist drove 10,000 miles a year in a car that got 20 miles per gallon, he would pay a refundable fee of \$100 if the rate was 20 cents a gallon.

He said he has discussed the fee plan, along with several other energy conservation measures, with Ford's "senior advisers."

Sawhill, interviewed on the NBC Today program, said he was opposed to a straight, non-refundable tax on gasoline.

"I don't think that a straight tax would make sense but I do think that some kind of a refundable fee might make sense because it would help poorer

people," he added.

He said a straight gasoline tax presents two problems.

"In the first place, in order to really be effective it has to be quite large," he said. "A small gasoline tax is really not going to cutback on gasoline consumption by the amount we need to really have a credible conservation program."

"And secondly, a gasoline tax would work a real hardship on some of the poorer people in our society. So any kind of gasoline tax would have to somehow be coupled with a refunding provision. And that's why we've talked about a refundable conservation fee, a fee that might be imposed on gasoline but would then be refunded..."

EPA clean-up set

WASHINGTON (UPI) — The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) yesterday ordered a water pollution cleanup by most of the nation's power plants that will cost \$4.1 billion and eventually raise everyone's electric bill a little more.

The program is not as ambitious as originally proposed by the agency, but EPA Administrator Russell E. Train said it was sufficient to "insure the cleanup and protection of our waters without requiring the consumers of electric power to shoulder the cost of unnecessary investments."

By 1983 when the program is finished, Train said, it might increase electric bills by up to 1.5 per cent; but, he said, "in the perspective of the overall amount it does not seem too significant, in view of the benefits you're getting."

Chairman Dixy Lee Ray of the Atomic Energy Commission criticized the EPA move as it applies to nuclear

generating plants, saying it would cost as much as \$3 billion to comply and that environmental pollution from that source is already under adequate restraint by the AEC and state laws.

"The environment will not be further protected in a significant way. The thermal releases from these plants must meet state water quality standards. This is the wrong time and the wrong reason to spend additional millions of dollars," she said in a statement.

The rules are designed to implement the 1972 Clean Water Act which requires water polluters to install the "best practicable" pollution control equipment by 1977 and the "best available" technology by 1983.

Yesterday's rules are designed to control both thermal pollution — heated water discharged after use in generating plants — and chemical dumping from such installations.

EPA said the industry is

already building or planning to build plants with closed systems, which do not return their cooling water to the river or stream from which it is taken.

In addition, it said, a number of older, smaller plants which were originally scheduled to be covered by the new regulations will be exempt because they will be gradually phased out during the coming years.

It estimated that 75 per cent of the nation's generating capacity will be equipped with closed-cycle cooling systems by 1983.

A provision also was made exempting those plants which can prove that their discharge of heated water has no effect on local fishlife.

Another exemption granted to industry involved the need to install water cooling towers. If a plant — largely those in urban areas — does not have enough land around it as determined by a formula, it will not have to build such a tower.

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