

Singer Pleads Guilty, Is Fined \$2,500

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BALTIMORE, June 11—The Singer Co. was fined \$2,500 by a U.S. judge today after the company pleaded guilty at a hearing here to a misdemeanor charge that it had illegally contributed \$10,000 to the 1972 Nixon-Agnew campaign.

During the same hearing, federal prosecutors dropped felony charges that the company was involved in a criminal fraud conspiracy to funnel the money to the campaign

through J. Walter Jones, the wealthy Annapolis banker who has been described by prosecutors as a "bag man" for former Vice President Agnew.

Had Singer been convicted of the felony charges, the company might not have been able to bid on federal contracts. Though the company is most famous for its sewing machines, Singer also has received U.S. contracts for work in many other areas, including aerospace technology.

Jones, who has pleaded innocent to conspiracy and extortion charges in the case, is scheduled to stand trial in the fall. The guilty plea by Singer eliminated what investigators had considered a strategic handicap to the prosecution of Jones.

Because Singer's trial was scheduled before Jones', prosecutors expressed concern that Jones' lawyers would gain considerable advantage by watching the prosecution case and tactics. Government pros-

ecutors, led by Assistant United States Attorney Barnett D. Skolnik worked out the agreement for a plea with Singer after a judge granted the separate trials to Singer and Jones.

Jones has been a major target of the U.S. attorney's office here ever since he refused to cooperate in the investigation of cash kickbacks from architects and engineers to Agnew. The prosecutors have said in open court that Jones

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collected some of that money for the former Vice President and governor of Maryland. Jones repeatedly has denied all wrongdoing.

At today's hearing, in a joint statement read by Assistant U.S. Attorney Daniel Hurzon and concurred with by Singer's lawyer, Stephen H. Sachs, both sides noted that no one in Singer's top corporate management had authorized the illegal \$10,000 contribution to the Nixon-Agnew campaign.

Arthur M. Carter Jr., formerly vice president and general manager of the Silver Spring office of Singer's Simulation Products Division, previously had pleaded guilty to making the contribution. No date has been set for his sentencing.

In recent weeks, the prosecutors have dropped charges against Raymond A. Long,

president of the Simulation Products Division, in connection with the contribution.

The maximum fine for Singer's illegal act is \$5,000. Sachs, Singer's lawyer, argued successfully that his client's offense was less significant than the crimes committed by many corporations charged by the Watergate special prosecutor with illegal contributions. He said no upper echelon corporate officials were involved and unlike the Watergate cases, there was no slush fund within the corporation for the contribution. Sachs argued that the maximum fine that was levied on some of these other corporations should not be imposed for Singer's lesser crime.

Skolnik argued that the \$5,000 maximum (since raised to \$25,000 by Congress) was itself "unrealistic" for large corporations. "A lesser fine is in fact that much more unrealistic," Skolnik said.

Judge R. Dorsey Watkins imposed the fine saying he agreed with Sachs.