

Two Ex-Dairy Aides Get First Jail Terms Given for Watergate-Tied Election Gifts

By a WALL STREET JOURNAL Staff Reporter

WASHINGTON—Two former officials of the nation's largest dairy cooperative were sentenced to jail for authorizing illegal campaign donations. It was the first time prison terms have been imposed for that offense in the Watergate-related cases.

Sentenced to serve four months in jail were Harold Nelson, former general manager of Associated Milk Producers Inc. and David L. Parr, former special counsel to the huge dairy co-op based in San Antonio, Texas. Each also was fined \$10,000.

Both men last summer pleaded guilty to authorizing the payment of corporate money to Republicans and Democrats. In addition, Nelson admitted conspiring in 1971 to bribe then Treasury Secretary John Connally in connection with an increase in federal milk price-support levels. Nelson's sentence also covers this charge.

Mr. Connally previously was indicted on charges of accepting a \$10,000 bribe, conspiracy and perjury. He has denied all the charges. Nelson is expected to be a key witness in the Connally trial, which will probably begin within a few months.

Associated Milk Producers itself previously was fined the maximum \$35,000 for making an illegal contribution to Richard

Nixon's 1972 reelection campaign. In April 1970, the dairy co-op pledged \$2 million to the Nixon campaign but contributed only part of that, amid allegations that the milk unit was attempting to persuade the Nixon administration to boost federal milk-support price levels.

Judge George L. Hart, chief judge of the federal court in Washington, said he was imposing the jail terms to deter further violations of the federal law forbidding corporations from contributing to political campaigns.

"You pleaded guilty to crimes that hundreds of persons have been guilty of in past years," Judge Hart said. "Nothing was ever done about it."

Judge Hart particularly has been criticized for what many claim has been soft treatment by the courts of executives convicted of the offense. Indeed, only fines were imposed against the 19 executives of other companies convicted in the Watergate special prosecutor's investigation of corporate political contributions.

Nelson and Parr will begin their jail terms Friday at a federal prison in Montgomery, Ala. Each was sentenced to three years, but Judge Hart suspended all but four months of those terms.