

Inquiry Hears Kalmbach Tell Of Funds Role

By Richard L. Lyons and Bradley Graham
Washington Post Staff Writers

Herbert W. Kalmbach gave the House Judiciary Committee testimony on political fund raising yesterday which some members called damaging to President Nixon, even though they heard no evidence of his direct involvement in wrongdoing.

Incidents that most concerned the members of the im-

peachment inquiry were Kalmbach's involvement in obtaining money from dairy interests which wanted and then received higher price supports, and his promise of ambassadorships in exchange for contributions.

"We're beginning to establish a case of bribery," said Rep. Elizabeth Holtzman (D-N.Y.) of the milk transactions.

"This is the most damaging stuff I've heard yet," said Rep. Lawrence J. Hogan (R-Md.) of the promise of ambassadorships.

Kalmbach, formerly personal lawyer and fund raiser for the President, has pleaded guilty to charges of selling ambassadorships and illegal fund raising for the 1970 congressional campaigns.

H. R. (Bob) Haldeman, then White House chief of staff and the closest aide to the President, was directly involved in both matters, according to Kalmbach's testimony. Members described Kalmbach's role as merely a conduit to carry the money.

Everything Kalmbach told the committee about these two matters was already on the public record, but it apparently was news to some committee members. And having the man involved there in the flesh to tell the story evidently gave it fresh impact.

Kalmbach's involvement in the milk matter was in two parts. In August, 1969, he said, he was authorized by Haldeman to accept a \$100,000 cash contribution from dairy interests after Kalmbach had relayed to Haldeman the industry's "goals" of an increase in federal price supports plus a personal appearance by President Nixon at a dairy dinner and a picture-taking ceremony for their top officials at the White House.

The larger part of the story

occurred in March, 1971, after the industry had pledged \$2 million to the President's 1972 campaign.

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On March 23, President Nixon decided, but did not announce, an increase in milk price supports worth several hundred million dollars to the industry. The next evening, on instructions from John D. Ehrlichman, then top domestic affairs aide to the President, Kalmbach said he met with a top official of the dairy industry and received a reaffirmation of the \$2 million pledge. The next day, the increase in milk price supports was announced.

One of the allegations the committee has been investigating is that the milk price supports were raised in exchange for the campaign money and that the announcement was delayed until the pledge was reaffirmed. The committee has received no evidence that the President was personally involved in such a deal.

Rep. Trent Lott (R-Miss.) said of Kalmbach's milk testimony: "I'd just as soon he hadn't said some of the things he said." He said Kalmbach's testimony gave a stronger impression than any other they had heard that "there was an understanding."

Rep. William Cohen (R-Maine) called it "very strong testimony." But Rep. Charles Wiggins (R-Calif.) observed that Kalmbach "never once took us into the Oval Office" to the President himself.

Kalmbach also told the committee of obtaining a \$100,000 contribution from J. Fife Symington in 1970 in exchange for a promise for an ambassadorship which didn't develop and of \$50,000 from Vincent de Roulet on the same grounds. They had been ambassadors to Trinidad and Tobago and to Jamaica, respectively, and wanted to move up. Kalmbach also told of contacts with Ruth Barkas who was named ambassador to Luxembourg after contributing \$200,000 after the 1972 election.

"It looks as though they were selling ambassadorships," said Hogan. "Haldeman was obviously involved. Kalmbach was only a conduit." Again, Hogan said there was no testi-

mony linking the President directly to the incidents.

Kalmbach also told the committee, according to Wiggins, that he never spoke to President Nixon about the \$150,000 that he raised in the summer of 1972 to pay to Watergate defendants for legal and personal expenses. The President has stated he did not learn of these payments, also called hush money, until March 21, 1973. Kalmbach also told the committee that although he was Mr. Nixon's personal lawyer he met with him only about once a year.

Kalmbach was the last of nine witnesses to appear before the committee as it ended exactly 10 weeks of examining evidence on whether the President should be impeached.

Now members must bite the bullet and vote. The issue is especially excruciating for Republican members who must decide whether a President of their party has shown himself unfit to continue to hold the office he won by a landslide vote less than two years ago.

One of them, Rep. Robert McClory (R-Ill.) said yesterday he has not ruled out the possibility that he may vote for impeachment despite the "suicidal implications."

McClory said what bothers him most is the President's defiance of Congress in refusing to turn over material the committee requested, and the fact that "so many men who were working in the White House right under the President's nose" are going to prison for Watergate or other wrongdoing. McClory said he finds it difficult to avoid the conclusion that the President was either involved or was grossly negligent in supervising his closest aides.

There appeared a possibility that television may be allowed to broadcast meetings next week when the committee will debate and vote on articles of impeachment. The House Rules Committee will meet this morning to consider a change in House rules to permit televising of committee meetings. Present rules permit televising only of hearings. The 10 weeks of hearings were closed to all media.