

# Ex-Gov. Babcock of Montana Admits '72 Campaign Offense

By Timothy S. Robinson  
Washington Post Staff Writer

Former Montana Gov.

Tim M. Babcock pleaded guilty yesterday to being the middleman for \$54,000 in illegal campaign contributions from oilman Armand Hammer to President Nixon's 1972 re-election campaign.

Babcock could be sentenced to one year in jail and fined \$1,000 for the misdemeanor charge of aiding and abetting Hammer in the contribution. He was released by U.S. District Court Chief Judge George L. Hart Jr. yesterday pending a presentence report.

Sources in the Watergate special prosecutor's office confirmed after the plea that Hammer is the subject of an ongoing investigation into the contribution, an inquiry in which two other current or former Occidental Petroleum Co. employees have been granted immunity from prosecution. A letter released by the prosecutor's office in connection with the Babcock plea referred to the probe as the "Hammer/Babcock" investigation.

Hammer is president of Occidental Petroleum, a Los Angeles-based firm.

Babcock, who is now a Helena, Mont., businessman, was an official of Occidental Petroleum in Washington when the money was turned over to the Nixon re-election committee in installments of varying amounts of cash be-

tween Sept. 15, 1972, and Jan. 17, 1973.

The one-count criminal information filed by Assistant Watergate Special Prosecutor Thomas F. McBride charges that Babcock made the contributions in the names of four other Occidental Petroleum officials and himself, "when in fact they were a contribution by Armand Hammer."

Hammer, whose firm has been involved in two massive trade deals with the Soviet Union in the past two years, gave a total of \$100,000 to the Nixon re-election campaign, according to campaign financial records and yesterday's disclosures. Hammer gave \$46,000 in cash during a secret fund-raising drive before a new campaign contribution law took effect in April, 1972, those records showed.

Watergate investigators have alleged that some of the money donated by Hammer through Babcock eventually was commingled in a \$350,000 secret fund held by White House officials. Another portion of the Hammer-Babcock donation was given to Nixon campaign aide Frederick C. LaRue, who has admitted having custody of secret cash funds that were allegedly used to

make payments to the original Watergate defendants.

As a part of their inquiry into the Hammer-Babcock donation, Watergate investigators quietly granted immunity from prosecution more than two months ago to two men linked to Hammer. One was James B. Patton, counsel for Occidental International Corp. in Washington, and the other was John Tigrett, an American who lives in London and Memphis and who has dealt financially with Hammer in the past.

In the letter released yesterday, the special prosecutor's office told Babcock attorney Raymond J. Larrocca that the plea would dispose of all potential charges against Babcock "based on matters presently known to this office arising out of the Hammer/Babcock campaign contribution currently under investigation by this office and the grand jury, including any potential liability arising out of any efforts to conceal the true nature of such contribution."

The letter said it did not rule out possible criminal tax liability that Babcock may have in connection with the contribution "and concealment efforts disclosed by Mr. Babcock to this office." The letter was signed



**TIM M. BABCOCK**  
... pleads guilty

on Aug. 21 by then Watergate Special Prosecutor Leon Jaworski.

As a part of the plea arrangement, Babcock must testify on behalf of the United States in its ongoing investigation. The government said it would make no recommendation concerning the sentencing of Babcock.

The 55-year-old Babcock, who was governor of Montana from 1962 until 1968, stood quietly before Judge Hart as the judge read him the charges. He replied "Yes, Your Honor," when asked if, in fact, he had committed the crimes alleged. Babcock had no comment after the plea.

Hammer, 76, is a noted patron of the arts, and has been chairman of the board and president of Occidental since 1957.