

Link Between GOP Gift, Bank Chartering Denied

8-29-72
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William B. Camp, the U.S. comptroller of the currency, declared emphatically yesterday that there was no connection at all between his approval of a charter for a new bank in Minnesota and a secret \$25,000 contribution to President Nixon's campaign.

In a letter to Rep. Wright Patman (D-Tex.), who had asked for records about the charter approval, Camp said that any implication that it was "related to political contributions . . . is without any foundation and wholly unwarranted."

"I'm an honest man," Camp declared at a press conference, "and I resent (these implications) to the core."

Patman, head of the House Banking Committee, charged yesterday that Camp "normally operates his office in the

dark . . . and has long displayed a cavalier attitude about his accountability to the public and Congress."

Camp, who has spent 37 years in the Treasury Department, was appointed head of the government's national banking system by President Johnson in 1967. He was reappointed by Mr. Nixon in February for a second five-year term.

The new federal charter, approved by Camp on Tuesday, is for a bank in a shopping center in suburban Minneapolis. Among its five directors is Dwayne Andreas, a Minneapolis investor whose \$25,000 contribution to President Nixon wound up in the bank account of one of the suspects in the break-in at Democratic head-

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quarters at the Watergate here.

Another director is Kenneth H. Dahlberg, the President's Midwest finance director, who received the donation from Andreas.

Camp's approval of the application came 88 days after it was filed. Last week in interviews two Minnesota state banking officials said the action was unusually fast.

Camp agreed yesterday that the decision was quick, but he explained, "This is one of the cleanest cases I've ever seen . . . the case is so good on the banking and economic factors that it could be handled with some dispatch."

At the press conference he showed copies of documents on the application that he said he was passing on to Patman. They indicated that approval of the charter was recommended by five career officials before the Camp acted on it.

Camp added that his office acts on most applications within 90 to 100 days, although he said he did not have detailed figures on how fast his office acts to show reporters.

The \$25,000 contribution

from Andreas to Dahlberg for the Nixon campaign has been traced by the FBI to the Florida bank account of Bernard L. Barker, one of the five suspects in the break-in at Democratic National Headquarters on June 17 in the Watergate office building.

Dahlberg has said he passed the funds on to Maurice Stans, the Nixon campaign's chief fund-raiser. Stans then turned the check over to his staff, and the check was eventually deposited in Barker's Miami bank account.

Dahlberg denied last week any connection between the donation and the charter approval.

A story reporting on the charter approval and the campaign contribution was printed Saturday in The Washington Post. Camp said yesterday that he did not comment on it earlier because he was on a business trip to Alaska.

Patman made his request for documents in the case in a letter sent to Camp on Saturday. Yesterday Camp called the committee chairman "a great publicity seeker," and said his request was "politically motivated."

Patman replied in a statement that he has "reached no conclusion concerning this bank" charter, but said the issue was raised in the press and should be investigated.

"The comptroller is a very excitable gentleman who often shoots from the hip," Patman added.

The charter application distributed by Camp yesterday lists three other directors of the bank besides Andreas and Dahlberg. They are Frederick L. Deming, former undersecretary of the Treasury for President Johnson; Eugene T. Montgomery, regional head of the Sears Roebuck Company in Minneapolis; and Bernard C. Jacobs, board chairman of the National City Bank of Minneapolis.

The National City Bank is controlled by the Independent Bankcorporation, which also plans to own and operate the new institution, which will be known as the Ridgedale National Bank.

The bank holding company is a subsidiary of Archer Daniels Midland Corp., primarily a processor of soybean oils, in which Andreas and his brother Lowell hold a major interest.

A spokesman for the Justice Department said yesterday that the General Accounting Office report on President Nixon's campaign finances has been referred to the criminal division for "review and appropriate action." The GAO report found 11 "apparent" and "possible" violations in the GOP's handling of campaign donations and expenditures.

In a prepared statement, the spokesman said the release of the GAO report to the public is "counter to normal investigative procedures and may prejudice a potential defendant's right to a fair trial."

Philip S. Hughes, director of the elections office in the GAO, denied that the public release is unusual and said reports have been made public in at least three recent cases.

In a related matter, it was learned that the offices of the Dade County state's attorney in Florida were broken into several days after its chief investigator opened an inquiry into the break-in and alleged bugging of Democratic National headquarters in Washington.

The state's attorney, Richard E. Gerstein, said yesterday, "It's just too much of a coincidence, especially in view of the fact that we've never been broken into in 16 years."

The only office apparently disturbed was that of Gerstein's chief investigator, Martin Dardis, who on June 30 began an independent investigation of the Watergate incident.

The Florida investigation was opened because four of the suspects in the Watergate break-in are from Miami and may have violated Florida conspiracy laws, Gerstein said.

The forced entry into Dardis' office was discovered on July 5, "just after the word started getting around town that I was asking questions about the Watergate case," Dardis said yesterday.

The intruders apparently gained entrance to Dardis' office by smashing out a louvered door panel, walking down a hallway and then removing a panel of glass over the door to the investigator's suite.

They also removed a ceiling panel in the office. It was

discovered slightly ajar and led Dardis immediately to speculate that someone had attempted to plant an electronic eavesdropping device inside. A "sweep" for bugging devices turned up no such evidence.

According to State's Attorney Gerstein, the office was "somewhat in disarray" when Dardis returned to work following the July 4 holiday weekend.

In addition, police found several burned match stubs on a sill above the door to Dardis' office. "It looked like

somebody stood on a chair and lit matches," said one of Gerstein's office workers.

Dardis said yesterday that no papers concerning his inquiry into the Watergate affair were disturbed because they were inside a locked safe that the intruders apparently made no attempt to open. The investigator said the Watergate inquiry was the only "sensitive" matter he was working on at the time of the break-in, and that "I just can't see any other reason for someone to break in."