

Official Defends Bank Charter To Unit Including Nixon Donor

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WASHINGTON, Sept. 24 — The Government official responsible for the decision to grant a bank charter to a Minnesota group that included major contributors to the Nixon campaign denied today that that decision had been taken with unusual speed.

The official is William B. Camp, Controller of the Currency, whose office is responsible for the chartering of national banks. He defended his action in a letter to Representative Wright Patman, chairman of the House Banking Committee.

The charter for a bank in Ridgeway, Minn., near Minneapolis, was granted earlier this month, 86 days after the application was filed.

Mr. Camp said that there was nothing unusual in such speed and listed 50 cities in which bank charters had been granted in less than 100 days during the last five years.

424 Applications Received

The 50 applications were among the total of 424 applications for national bank charters received by Mr. Camp's agency during the five years.

Mr. Camp said that 79 other applications had been processed in 100 to 130 days.

The big campaign contributor among the five principal organizers of the new bank was Dwayne O. Andreas, a Minneapolis businessman who gave \$25,000 in cash to the Nixon campaign, assertedly just before a new law went into effect requiring disclosure of the names of all major contributors.

Another organizer of the bank was Kenneth H. Dahlberg, the Middle Western Republican finance director, to whom Mr. Andreas gave his contribution.

The \$25,000 given by Mr. Andreas was found by the Federal Bureau of Investigation in the bank account of one of the

persons allegedly involved in the break-in of the Democratic national headquarters in the Watergate complex here.

A spokesman for Representative Patman said that he was not satisfied with Mr. Camp's report.

Competing Groups Cited

He said that the Controller had not explained why the charter had been granted so swiftly in a situation where two other groups of applicants were competing for a charter in the same location. Nor, he said, did the Controller explain why the charter was granted to the Andreas group two days before a hearing was scheduled on the application of one of the competing groups.

Once the Andreas group got the charter, the competing charters were automatically rejected, because no one argued that the new shopping center, where the bank was to go, could support more than one bank.

Most persons in the area probably assumed that the scheduled hearing would include a hearing into the qualifications of the Andreas group, as well as those of the competing applicants, since hearings on rival applications are normally consolidated into one hearing, Mr. Patman's spokesman said.

Mr. Camp argued that his figures on the time it had taken to process other bank-charter applications showed "clearly" that there was absolutely nothing unusual about the processing of the application of the Andreas group.

"We cannot understand how any fair-minded person could conclude that the subject applicant got a Federal bank charter faster than most people do," he said.