

Honesty in Government

WASHINGTON — It would be in the spirit of Judeo-Christian charity to give everyone the benefit of doubt and say that a secret \$25,000 gift to the Nixon reelection fund had nothing to do with the hasty grant of a new Minnesota bank charter to the donor, Dwayne Andreas.

But the evidences of big favors for big money keep piling up in this Administration to the point that only a fool would give anyone the benefit of doubt.

I CALL your attention again to that remarkable, almost incredible, revelation on "Meet the Press" two weeks ago by Clark MacGregor, the former Minnesota Congressman who now heads Mr. Nixon's reelection campaign.

MacGregor said the lawyer for a generous Democratic donor had awakened him at half-past midnight to plead with him not to reveal his client's name. Keeping "faith" with people like this donor was MacGregor's justification for not revealing those who gave \$10 million to the Nixon campaign through some sleazy maneuvering just in time to evade the new campaign reporting law.

Was it Andreas's lawyer who telephoned MacGregor? Surely Andreas had enough reasons to fear embarrassment. Here was the friend and No. 1 supporter of Sen. Hubert H. Humphrey, playing financial footsie with the enemy.

If it wasn't Andreas's lawyer who telephoned MacGregor with that desperate plea for secrecy, then it means someone else among the givers of that secret \$10 million has as much or more to hide than

Andreas. And that deepens the pall of shame that lies about this fund, part of which former Commerce Secretary Maurice Stans funneled through Mexico so as to disguise it and hide the name of the donors.

Imagine the No. 1 fund-raiser for the President of the United States with a secret slush fund of at least \$350,000 in his personal safe. At least \$114,000 from that fund winds up in the Miami bank account of a man arrested with, and believed to be the leader of, a team of burglars bugging Democratic party headquarters.

Yet, Stans offers the country only evasive talk in which he tries to discredit a damning report by the General Accounting Office. The White House offers disdainful silence as if to say, "When you've got the election wrapped up, you don't have to answer for any sins."

Americans are left only to hope that Attorney-General Richard Kleindienst is going to order a vigorous investigation which opens the way to indictment and possible imprisonment of high officials in that Committee to Reelect the President.

ON THE OTHER HAND, there is pathetically little public outcry. It is as though the people have become inured to corruption, considering it the new American way of life, as it long has been in some Asian lands.

Or perhaps we have a situation where political partisanship overrides any concern for governmental ethics. It is as though millions of Americans were saying: "I never asked for honesty. All I asked was that my brand of crooks be in control for a while."