

Chotiner, Mitchell Allegedly Talked About U.S. Suit Against Dairy Co-Op

CHICAGO, Dec. 5 (AP) — President Nixon's associate Murray M. Chotiner talked to Attorney General John N. Mitchell about a 1972 antitrust suit against the nation's largest dairy co-operative, according to a letter from Chotiner's law partner.

Chotiner had helped funnel large dairy contributions into the Nixon re-election committee, which Mitchell headed after leaving the Justice Department.

The Justice Department is still pressing its suit, which accuses the Texas-based Associated Milk Producers Inc. of anticompetitive practices in marketing milk in 14 Midwestern states. The letter from Chotiner's partner, Marion E. Harrison, was introduced as evidence in the case today.

Harrison's letter dated Feb. 25, 1972, was to George Mehren, general manager of the milk producers.

Harrison said Chotiner met Mitchell at a party, and "this subject came up."

Harrison suggested in another letter, to the milk producers' lawyer who was negotiating with Justice Department offi-

cial in Chicago, that he expected Richard G. Kleindienst, who succeeded Mitchell as Attorney General, to instruct the government lawyers to soften their position. "There's nothing like being able to control a subordinate," he said.

Harrison's letters came about the time the relationship between the milk producers and the administration went sour. The milk producers now contend they are victims of an administration vendetta.

Kleindienst later ran into trouble at his Senate confirmation hearings over the administration's handling of an antitrust case against the International Telephone and Telegraph Co., which reportedly had pledged \$400,000 in aid to the Republican national convention. He was not confirmed until June 8, 1972.

The administration also was being sued by consumer groups which alleged that the milk producers and other dairy groups received a large increase in milk price supports in return for the campaign contributions which Chotiner helped direct.

The Justice Department has not, in the meantime, softened its stand in the antitrust case. The milk producers have complained that the Nixon administration is punishing them to counter criticism over past decisions affecting dairymen.