

A Charge of Raising Campaign Funds in VA

Washington

Senator Alan Cranston charged yesterday that employees of the Veterans Administration were encouraged two years ago by their superiors to contribute money to President Nixon's re-election campaign.

Cranston, chairman of a subcommittee of the Senate Veterans Affairs Committee, said that he did not know for certain that Donald E. Johnson, head of the administration, had solicited money himself.

But the California Democrat said that there was no question but that Johnson was aware of the solicitations.

Cranston's charges were confirmed last night by a former VA official who said he was solicited for contributions.

Johnson announced Monday that he was resigning his position, and Senate sources said yesterday that one of the principal factors that led to what they called a forced resignation was disclosure of the campaign fund-raising.

At the White House yesterday, Gerald Warren, the President's spokesman, denied that Johnson had been forced to quit and called him a "fine public servant."

Johnson denied in a telephone conversation last



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DONALD JOHNSON
He's resigning

night that he had known of political fund-raising in his agency.

Cranston said that he had notified the Watergate special prosecutor, the Senate

Watergate committee and the Civil Service commission of possible violations of the Hatch Act.

That law prohibits employees of the federal government from soliciting campaign money or actively participating in a partisan political campaign, although it does not forbid political contributions.

According to Cranston and other Senate sources who would not allow themselves to be identified, a top assistant to Johnson urged VA employees to buy \$100 chances to attend a \$1000-a-plate dinner for the President in the spring of 1972.

According to the sources, \$3000 was raised in this fashion. Johnson himself is said to have taken one of the tickets, and the other two were raffled off among the VA employees who had contributed.

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