

EVIDENCE LACKING

Bruton Doubts If N.C. Can Act Against Klan

Gunman Robs Troutman NCNB Branch Of \$9,543

By BILL FULLER

Observer (Redell Bureau)

TROUTMAN — A good-looking gunman robbed the North Carolina National Bank here of \$9,543 just before noon Thursday.

A well-dressed man forced bank manager Albert White and two tellers and a patron into the vault before he fled.

Late Thursday, Fredell Sheriff Charles Hample said a 1946-model car found abandoned at the Duck Creek Gun Club on the edge of Troutman had been identified as one stolen Wednesday night in Taylorsville, and was believed to be the one used by the bandit.

Bank Manager White said the gunman was neatly dressed, wore a straw hat and wrap-around sun glasses. He carried an automatic pistol, presumably a .38 or .45 with a silencer, in gloved hands. White said the pistol was "about 10 inches long."

White described the gunman as about 5-10, and weighing about 165 pounds.

"He approached the first teller, Miss Frankie Henkel first," White said.

Miss Henkel said she asked if she could help him.

"He didn't answer and was fumbling around under his coat," she said. "Then I saw the gun and he told me it was a holdup."

The gunman then went to White's desk and forced White and Miss Henkel to lie face down on the floor. He went to the back of the bank and found another teller, Mrs. Ann Gilleland, and made her sit down and close her eyes.

cages and stuffed a cloth bank deposit bag with the money.

About that time, Tom McKnight, publisher of the Mooresville Tribune, walked in and the gunman forced him into a chair.

"He then told us to get in the vault and closed the door behind us," White said.

White said the four were in the vault for about five minutes

before the gunman left. They let themselves out and called police.

Ironically, a "substantial" sum of money was in the bank at the time in cash mill workers paying checks, but the gunman overlooked it.

It was the first time in 14 years of business the bank has been robbed.

White said the man didn't "talk rough or anything" and

the whole thing was over in about 10 minutes.

"These things happen all the time," White said. "You just always hope they don't happen at your bank."

"I was real proud of the way the women acted, though," White said.

White said he believed the man was a stranger in Troutman, a small town in southern Fredell County five miles south of Statesville.

Revocation Of Charter Ruled Out

RALEIGH —(P)— Attorney General Wade Bruton and his top aide said Thursday they had "grave doubts" that the state had sufficient evidence to revoke the Ku Klux Klan's charter to operate in North Carolina.

Bruton and Deputy Attorney General Ralph Moody gave the ruling in a lengthy letter to Gov. Dan Moore after they had examined documents and official reports submitted by the governor's office relating to the Invisible Empire, United Klons, Knights Ku Klux Klan of America, Inc.

Moore disclosed the attorney general's ruling to members of his Law and Order Committee at a meeting in his office. He said the committee agreed that "it should not recommend to Secretary of State Thad Eure that procedures be initiated to revoke the Klan's certificate of authority to do business in North Carolina."

Lawyer Malcolm Seawell, former chairman of the Law and Order Committee, has strongly advocated revocation of the Klan's charter. Informed of the attorney general's ruling and the committee action, Seawell said:

"There is every reason in the world to revoke the certificate of domestication, and there is every reason under the law why it never should have been granted."

Moore's statement said, "The committee expressed continued interest in alleged activities of individual members of the organization Klan." Moore said in a statement following the closed meeting, "It recommended to the State Bureau of Investigation and

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Welfare Change Cuts Costs

RALEIGH —(P)— Welfare recipients in 71 North Carolina counties will be getting their monthly checks earlier, thanks to a new system of direct mailing started Thursday by the State Board of Public Welfare.

Another benefit to be realized will be an annual savings of \$16,600 to the counties involved and at least \$3,000 in the State.

The checks were mailed directly to recipients Thursday and the Board will continue to do so in the future.

Previously, they were sent to the counties, which re-mailed them to the recipients.

Assistant Welfare Commissioner Clifton Craig said, "We consider this quite a significant management breakthrough."

He estimated that the 71 State will save \$16,600



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