

Hoover Criticizes Oswald Handling

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WASHINGTON — FBI Director J. Edgar Hoover told a congressional committee that Lee Harvey Oswald, claiming that President Kennedy's assassin would never have been slain in Dallas had he been under the control of federal officers.

Hoover used the Oswald incident to back up a plea to Congress to make assaults upon the President a federal crime.

"If the assassination of President Kennedy had been a federal violation, jurisdiction would have been under the Secret Service of the FBI and the episode in Dallas following the assassination would never have occurred," Hoover said.

CLOSED MEETING

The "episode" was the murder of Oswald by night club owner Jack Ruby in the police department basement two days later. Dallas Police Chief Jesse Curry had no comment on the FBI chief's remarks.

The FBI chief's testimony was before a House appropriations subcommittee's closed meeting last March 4. It was made public by the committee late Monday.

In his testimony, Hoover also repeated a claim made last year to the Warren Commission that he had considered Oswald a "thoroughly safe risk" because of a favorable report from the State Department.

Hoover's comments were volunteered to the committee rather than elicited by questioning.

The FBI director appeared before the panel headed by Rep. John Rooney of New York to substantiate a request for budget funds for the coming fiscal year and used the assassination in Dallas as one instance of an ever-increasing FBI work load.

DEMANDS GREAT

"Tremendous demands were placed on our manpower as a result of the investigation regarding the assassination of President Kennedy and the subsequent murder

of Lee Harvey Oswald," Hoover said.

He said the FBI moved 80 agents into Dallas immediately and eventually conducted "some 25,000 interviews" before the probe was completed.

"As an aftermath of the assassination, we assisted the Secret Service in the protection of the President. We furnished a total of 534 special agents on 74 occasions," Hoover testified.

The FBI director gave his description of Oswald as a thoroughly safe risk although no member of the committee raised the issue.

Hoover's plea for new legislation covering assaults upon the President went unexplained since the Appropriation Committee he appeared before is not authorized to write substantive legislation. It can only appropriate funds for purposes authorized by other congressional committees.

NOT FEDERAL OFFENSE

The FBI director said that if Congress writes such a law, it should guard against divided investigative jurisdiction and empower either the FBI or the Secret Service—but not both—to handle the matter.

Physical attacks upon a President—including assassination—do not now constitute federal offenses. Thus the assassination of President Kennedy was murder under Texas state criminal statutes and responsibility rested with local officers.

Hoover had earlier criticized Dallas authorities' handling of the incident in testimony before the Warren Commission.

The attached article was taken from the DALLAS TIMES HERALD, dated 17 May, 1965

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