

Case Against Oswald Firmed; Rankin Named Probe Counsel

WASHINGTON (AP) — Brown threads caught on an assassin's rifle helped to weave what the FBI considers a conclusive case against Lee Harvey Oswald as the lone slayer of President John F. Kennedy.

Government sources disclosed Tuesday, that the threads, identified as from Oswald's shirt, were found snagged in the mechanism of the Italian-made carbine which also bore his palm print.

Meantime the President's bipartisan investigating commission headed by Chief Justice Earl Warren began its analysis of the still-secret, five-volume FBI report on the Nov. 22 assassination in Dallas.

The commission also:

—Won from Congress the power to force witnesses to testify against their will, under immunity from self-incrimination. The House voted unanimously for the extraordinary subpoena power, as the Senate did Monday.

—Appointed J. Lee Rankin, former solicitor general of the United States, to be its general counsel for the top-level inquiry. Rankin is a Republican lawyer from Nebraska now practicing in New York. He was a Justice Department appointee of former President Dwight D. Eisenhower in 1953 and became solicitor general in 1956.

—Announced that the contents of the FBI's exhaustive report will not be made public formally until after the commission has studied it, but said a "preliminary statement" then would be made by Warren and his six colleagues.

(In Chicago, Rep. Gerald R. Ford, R-Mich., a member of the commission, said the evidence in the FBI report will not be made public until after the trial of Oswald's killer, Jack Ruby.)

This disappointed some investigative officials who had hoped to dispel, by prompt and full disclosure of the FBI findings, the murk of rumor and unverified report which has welled up as the aftermath to a national tragedy.

But key bits and pieces of the massive report continued to leak out anyway, and all tended to con-

firm what is known to be the conclusion of the FBI and the cooperating state, federal and local authorities:

That Oswald, 24-year-old ex-Marine and embittered Marxist, was the solitary and unaided assassin; and that Jack Ruby, who killed Oswald in the Dallas police garage two days later, had no

connection with Oswald or his deadly plan.

Among the strongest pieces of evidence, government sources said, are the shreds of cloth, the palm print, and some latent finger prints which were lifted by FBI technicians from wrapping paper which hid the bolt-action carbine when it was carried into the Dallas text book depository building where Oswald worked.

The weapon with its tell-tale threads and the wrapping paper were found in the sixth-floor room from which three shots were fired at the presidential car. Two struck and killed Kennedy, one seriously wounded Texas Gov. John Connally.

Oswald claimed he changed clothes in his rented room when he left the depository, just after the assassination. But the FBI's laboratory and other tests showed that the fragments came from the shirt he was wearing when arrested, officials said.

Informants emphasized that the FBI investigation does not flatly declare Oswald guilty. Like all other FBI investigative reports, it simply recites in detail the known facts and circumstances, but these all are said to point to the resentful Oswald to whom the Russians refused citizenship.

Two of the volumes are text largely narrative. Each is half an inch thick. Three more volumes contain exhibits, copies of documents, and diagrams.

The report is not considered complete, nevertheless. Scores of FBI agents still are working on the case, and supplementary re-

ports are expected from time to time as new leads are run down and belated information checked out.

This was believed to account for the decision to keep the report secret; the commission of distinguished citizens and lawmakers was created by President Johnson to assure the nation that all facts are known which can be known. If a premature report were issued which required later revision, public confidence in the findings would be damaged.

The joint resolution giving the commission sweeping subpoena powers swept through the House with rare dispatch. Introduced Monday, it was ready for Johnson's signature Tuesday. The House sponsors were Rep. Hale Boggs, D-La., and Rep. Ford, members of the Warren commission.

An identical bill, passed Monday by the Senate, was introduced by two other commission members, Sen. John Sherman Cooper, R-Ky., and Sen. Richard B. Russell, D-Ga. The other two members of the commission are John McCloy, former World Bank president, and Allen W. Dulles, former director of the Central Intelligence Agency.