

Hill Report Heaps Praise on Otepka

PT 5/29/69
Otto F. Otepka, the former State Department security aide, is lavishly praised in a Senate Judiciary Committee majority report as being "a fine example of the best type of career civil servant."

In endorsing Otepka for a \$36,000-a-year job on the Subversive Activities Control Board, the authors of the report released yesterday, also said they are convinced he has had no association with any "subversive organization."

That was in reply to criticism from liberal Senators who had suggested that Otepka's long legal battle with the Government had been financed with money from organizations linked with the

John Birch Society and the Liberty Lobby.

Sen. Edward M. Kennedy (D-Mass.) and Sen. Joseph D. Tydings (D-Md.) filed a dissent, partially on grounds that the majority report did not discuss in detail the financial support of Otepka's legal efforts.

The report should have given more consideration to his "major sources of financing," Kennedy and Tydings said.

Former Secretary of State Dean Rusk sought to discharge Otepka, the Department's chief security evaluator, in 1963 after he had given the Judiciary Committee some

documents the Department did not want released.

Otepka was refused reinstatement by the current secretary, William Rogers, and President Nixon appointed him to the Subversive Activities Control Board.

Some of the money Otepka used in his legal efforts came from the American Defense Fund and Defenders of American Liberties. Of them, the Committee's majority report said:

"There has been no direct charge that either organization is controlled by or is subservient to either the John Birch Society or the Liberty Lobby."

It said that, "Otto Otepka's strength lies in his record of

outstanding service to his country over a period of more than 30 years, in the respect and admiration accorded him by professional security officers both in and out of government."

It also cited expressions of support from the American Legion, the Young Republican organization and the League of Republican Women.

In a separate expression, Sen. Charles McC. Mathias (R-Md.) said he did not think the record in Otepka's case justifies all the assertions made in the majority report.

But Mathias said he also did not believe the record justified interfering with a President's "wide discretion" in submitting nominations.