

Library Checks Called Part of Routine Probe

Treasury Secretary David M. Kennedy issued a formal denial yesterday that Internal Revenue Service agents had ever embarked on a program of checking public libraries to identify readers of books on explosives or material considered "subversive."

In a letter to Sen. Sam J. Ervin Jr. (D-N.C.), Kennedy said his department "strongly opposes" any "general search" for readers' names but said limited checks for specific suspects' names had proved to be "an appropriate investigative technique."

Ervin, chairman of the Senate Constitutional Rights subcommittee, two weeks ago demanded Kennedy's explanation for reports that libraries in three cities had been checked by IRS special agents in an apparent invasion of citizen privacy.

Kennedy said the agents acted at local initiative, not on directions from Washington. Responding to Ervin's request for memoranda, he said there were "no internal written or oral communications" from Washington.

The Treasury secretary added that a general survey of the "feasability of using libraries as an investigative technique" was conducted in the Atlanta

area between June 25 and July 7 but "once this isolated survey was called to our attention it was immediately terminated."

Checks were made at libraries in Milwaukee for "corroborating information" on "prime suspects" in bombing cases, in the San Francisco suburb of Richmond, Calif., on a tip from "a reliable informant," and in Cleveland in an investigation of the Feb. 2 explosion at the Shaker Heights police station, Kennedy said.

The Cleveland library produced the names of three "suspects," Kennedy said, "including that of Martin Birns, who was determined to be responsible for the bombing and who died in the explosion."

Kennedy said no library information has been stored in any computer data bank but that some of it was turned over to the FBI and local police in Milwaukee and Cleveland.

Italian Explosion

Reuters

AVEZZANO, Italy, July 29—Army authorities announced today an army sergeant and four privates were seriously injured last night by an explosion in an army base near here.