

T.P. 6.22.69

HOOVER CALLS ROWAN RACIST

Columnist Said Blamed for Controversy

DETROIT (AP) — Negro columnist Carl T. Rowan, was called a racist Tuesday by FBI Director J. Edgar Hoover, two writers for the Knight Newspapers reported.

"That racist columnist, Rowan," Hoover was quoted by the writers as answering an inquiry as to who started the wiretapping controversy.

The interview was published by the Detroit Free Press in a copyright story in its Wednesday editions.

Hoover also declared Tuesday that other federal agencies had been tapping telephones "all over town for years," on their own authority until the Johnson administration clamped down, the story related.

Rowan accused Hoover of illegal eavesdropping in his June 15 column. He said the wiretaps "have moved this country far closer to a police state than most Americans realize."

There have been allegations that Hoover prodded Atty. Gen. Robert Kennedy into authorizing wiretaps on the phones of the late Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

"That's not true," said Hoover in the interview, denying he influenced Kennedy.

Hoover told the reporters that President Nixon telephoned him before his recent press conference and personally investigated the King wiretap authorization, the Free Press said.

The article stated:

"Discussing his general attitude toward electronic surveillance, Hoover said he has always been opposed to unrestricted wire tapping by federal agencies.

"He said he is opposed not

only in principle but because it tarnishes the FBI's image.

"This assertion also contradicts the statements of (former attorney generals) Nicholas Katzenbach and Ramsey Clark who claimed he was constantly goading them to tan homes.

"Said Hoover, 'Years ago, I recommended that all wire tapings by any agency have the approval of the attorney general.

"I didn't want the authority. Agencies were doing it all over town. Nobody paid any attention to me on this before President Johnson."

The story said Hoover cited the Central Intelligence Agency, Defense Department, Internal Revenue Service and "other intelligence agencies" as those participating in wiretapping.

"There was so much of it going on," Hoover was quoted. "Someone would come to me and complain. Then I would check around and I would find it was one of the other agencies."