PETERSEN TESTIMONY

FBI Report Halved Prior to Release

By Orr Kelly Star-News Staff Write

The 21-page report on the FBI's Cointelpro operations released Monday by Atty. Gen. William B. Saxbe was barely half the size of the full report he received from Asstratty. Gen. Henry E. Petersen last May.

In testimony before a Senate Judiciary subcommittee yesterday, Petersen said the report he gave Saxbe totaled 39 pages.

The report on the operation — which drew its name from Counter-Intelligence Program, told how the bureau carried on a 15-year campaign to disrupt the activities of a variety of suspective subversive groups.

When Saxbe released the report on Monday he was asked if there was a longer, bigger report.

"NO, THERE is not," he replied. "The only difference between that and the first working copy is that there have been certain foreign intelligence, security matters removed that we think should be classified," he explained at another point in the press conference. "They have nothing to do, substantially, with the problem or the program."

But, in response to a question during yesterday's hearing, Petersen said it was not accurate to describe the report released by Saxbe on Monday as the "Petersen Report" and that the document released on Monday was a rewritten version prepared by the attorney general's office.

Deputy Atty. Gen. Laurence H. Silberman, who represented Saxbe at the hearing, insisted that the full Petersen report does not contain any tacts about the Cointelpro operation with the exception of an item deleted to protect the identity of an informant not contained in the original Petersen report.

Petersen did say, however, that it was only within
the last week that bureau
officials provided written
evidence that details of the
operation were told to government officials outside
the bureau. His original report to Saxbe said no attorney general or other official
outside the bureau were informed of the Cointelpro
operation.

"No attorney general was ever given the full scope of these operations," Silberman repeated yesterday But he said some attorneys general were aware of certain aspects of the program.

YESTERDAY'S hearing was called by Rep. Don Edwards, D-Calif., chairman of the House subcommittee on civil and constitutional rights which he said has been given the responsibility to oversee FBI operations. By the end of the hearing, the members seemed to be reassured by Silberman's rejection of the concept of disruptive tactics and his assurance that he and Saxbe had confidence that FBI Director Clarance M. Kelley would come to them before authorizing any such actions in the future.

Kelley was far more restrained, however, in criticizing his predecessor, J. Edgar Hoover, than Silberman or the report released by Saxbe on Monday. Kelley, for example, said he would not agree with the report's characterization of some of the activities carried out by the FBI as "abhorrent."

At one point, he even left open the possibility that he might authorize disruptive activities on his own.

Rep. Jerome R. Waldie, D-Calif., asked: "Would you ask authority under any circumstances for approval of activity which could abridge the rights guaranteed to citizens of the United States by the Constitution?"

"I would not under any circumstances without going to the attorney general or the President do that," Kelley responded, "unless, in balance, there would be a feeling on my part that it would perhaps be a good idea,

"I DON'T know the circumstances that would permit this. I would, in committing my responsibilities, do this."

Later, John J. McDermott, assistant director of the bureau for public affairs, said Kelley's response to Waldie's question was apparently a misstatement of his position and that it would be corrected in the printed record of the hearing.

Kelley's position, he said; is that he would not authorize any disruptive activities without approval of the attorney general and, if necessary, the President, and that he would in no circumstances do anything illegal.