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Capital's Latest Game Is 'Match the Dossie

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WASHINGTON, Nov. 30.—The Federal Bureau of Investigation's files on Representative Robert F. Drinan, a Republican Catholic priest, contained summaries of several of his sermons. The most recent, by Eldridge Cleaver, a former leader of the Black Panthers, recorded the name of a person who took Friedberg to a political conference. Friedberg, a lawyer in Michigan, found a picture of the family of Richard in his state police records. A popular party game for political activists and journalists these days, and many of them would agree with Representative Drinan's assessment of official investigations: "God, the time wasted was incredible."

For some, the files are no joking matter. The Institute for Policy Studies, a left-wing research organization here, discovered that the F.B.I. had at one time stolen its trash as part of a massive surveillance operation that involved more than a dozen agents. They operated like a political police system," said Marcus G. Raskin, the institute's codirector.

About the only thing worse than having a big F.B.I. file in certain circles is having a small one or none at all; the humiliation ranks with being left off Richard M. Nixon's enemies list.

"A lot of Congressmen are afraid to ask for their files," crowed Representative Drinan, whose dossier ran 81 pages. "They're afraid they don't have one."

The Freedom of Information Act was adopted in 1966, but most investigative files were not opened to the public until the act was amended in 1975. Since then, the F.B.I. alone has re-

ceived about 40,000 requests for information; the Defense Department and the Central Intelligence Agency are also popular targets.

To obtain a Government file, one must write to the agency involved in making the Freedom of Information Act. It helps to provide personal details, particularly if the name is not unusual, and to offer to pay the costs of duplicating the material, usually 10 cents a page. At one time the backlog was so large that requests took a year to fill, but the F.B.I. put several hundred agents on the case last summer

and the waiting time is now about one month.

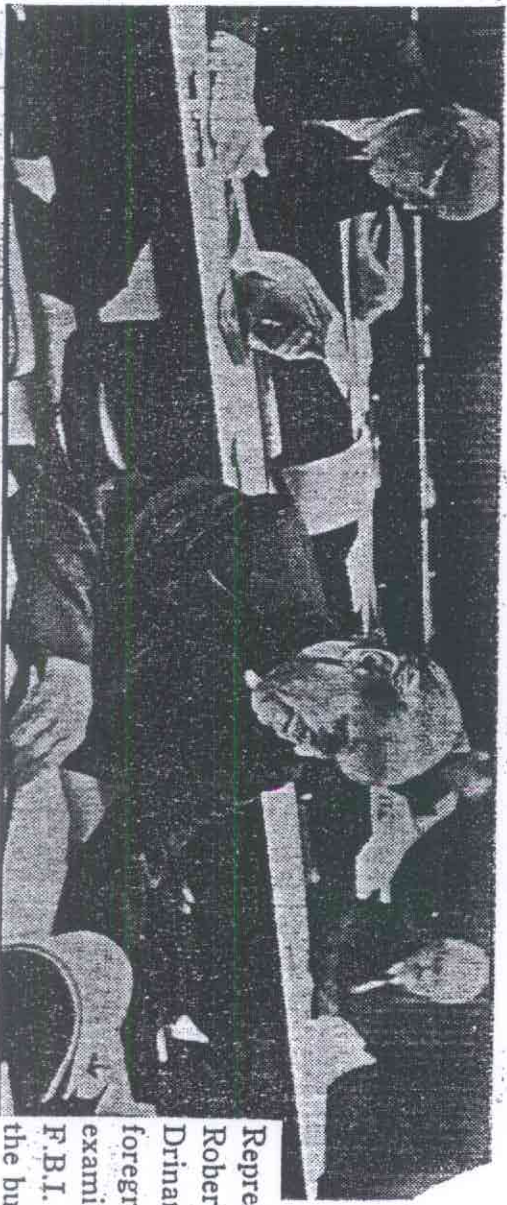
Under the law, Government agencies may withhold information for several reasons, including the protection of current investigations and the privacy of third parties. Critics contend that these exemptions are often abused, and Marcus Toppel, one of the lawyers for Mr. Cleaver, said that dozens of pages had been completely blacked out except for his client's name.

"It strikes me as the height of irony," the lawyer added, "that they are not giving us information to protect some-

one's privacy, while their investigation itself was an incredibly gross invasion of privacy. It's a classic case of double-think."

According to a spokesman, the bureau has liberalized its policies since last May, when Attorney General Griffin B. Bell ordered Government agencies to release any information that was not "demonstrably harmful." But many applicants are still not satisfied, and about 170 requests that could not be resolved by negotiation are now before Federal courts.

One problem, said the spokesman,



Representative Robert F. Drinan, foreground, examining his F.B.I. file in the bureau's reading room.

is that many investigations center on an event, not an individual, and release of the records could harm others. "The public doesn't have enough appreciation for what's contained in an investigatory record," the spokesman said.

Many applicants are astounded at the trivia they find in their files. Nina Tolenberg, a reporter for National Public Radio, said that her dossier was full of memorandums reporting her efforts to research a profile of the late J. Edgar Hoover.

"As a taxpayer, I'm outraged," said Miss Tolenberg. "If the F.B.I. spent as