

Contender for F.B.I. Post Oversaw 1975 Inquiry That Levi Rejected

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WASHINGTON, July 21—An official of the Federal Bureau of Investigation who is being considered for head of the bureau oversaw an internal investigation of possible corruption in the bureau in 1975 that was rejected as incomplete by Edward H. Levi, then Attorney General, and was characterized privately as a "white-wash" by several Justice Department officials.

The official, John A. Mintz, said today through a spokesman that it had been the considered judgment of three assistant directors of the bureau, himself and the two other members of a special committee that the report had been "complete and responsive" and had fulfilled the assignment; the committee had been given

Mr. Mintz, who is the bureau's chief counsel, was not one of the five candidates formally nominated for the post of F.B.I. director but has since been interviewed by Attorney General Griffin B. Bell and is reportedly being considered by President Carter and Mr. Bell as a "sixth candidate" for the job.

In late 1975, Clarence M. Kelley, then bureau director, named Mr. Mintz and two others to a special committee that was supposed to oversee and review an internal investigation of possible kickbacks by a contractor to bureau officials.

The investigation concluded that there was some question about the propriety of the arrangement between bureau officials and the contractor, U.S. Recording Company, but that there was no evidence of kickbacks or flat-out corruption.

The investigation report was sent to Mr. Levi in early 1976, but was sent back by the Attorney General in February of that year with instructions to the bureau to undertake a more extensive inquiry.

At the same time, the investigation was put more directly under the supervision of two Justice Department attorneys, John Dowd of the organized crime section and Michael Shaheen, the head of the Office of Professional Responsibility.

Although Mr. Levi did not openly crit-

cize the report at that time, there was considerable complaint by department officials familiar with the case that the F.B.I. investigation had been superficial and incomplete.

"It raised more questions than it answered," one official who read the report said recently. "The people who did the investigation asked vague questions and accepted vague answers at their face value."

Mr. Mintz, a 16-year veteran of the bureau who is well-regarded by others in the bureau's hierarchy, said, also through a spokesman, that he did not want to discuss the matter, because the investigation by Mr. Shaheen's group was still active.

The spokesman, Homer Boynton, the bureau's chief press officer, however, issued the following statement:

"The inspection report on the U.S. Recording Company investigation was reviewed by three assistant directors, one of whom was John Mintz. The report was compared with the stated objectives of the investigation and found to be complete and responsive to the questions which precipitated the inquiry."

A second member of the special committee, Raymond Wanall, who retired from the bureau in 1976, said that the committee had been created to determine whether the investigators had answered three questions: Whether the arrangement with the company had been proper, whether the profits to the company had been excessive, and whether there was evidence of wrongdoing on the part of specific bureau officials.

Subsequently, the broadened investigation by Mr. Shaheen's group into a variety of alleged abuses disclosed that F.B.I. workmen had installed valances in Mr. Kelley's apartment. The investigation also resulted in an indictment against one middle-level F.B.I. official on a misdemeanor charge and caused the forced resignation of the No. 2 man in the bureau, Nicholas P. Callahan.