

## 28 FBI Agents Employed By House Unit in Probes

### Congressional Quarterly

Washington — At a time when unprecedented criticism of J. Edgar Hoover and the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) has come from ranking members of Congress, a Congressional Quarterly study reveals that a powerful House committee depends heavily on the Bureau.

Assigned as investigators to the staff of the House Appropriations Committee are 28 agents of the FBI.

Three of the men, on three-year leaves of absence from the FBI, are the only full-time investigators employed by the committee. They are in charge of directing all investigations requested by the committee into the financial af-

fairs of government agencies and personnel.

The other 25 agents are currently assigned to the committee for special case work.

### FBI Confirms Findings

A survey of all committees showed that House Appropriations is the only committee now using FBI personnel for investigative work. An FBI spokesman confirmed the

findings.

"These men (FBI agents) are real pros," said Rep. George Mahon (D-Texas), chairman of the House Appropriations Committee. "We've never had the slightest difficulty."

"There's nothing secret about using these men," he asserted.

Rep. Abner J. Mikva (D-

Ill.), who was under surveillance by the 113th Military Intelligence Group for his opposition to the Vietnam war in 1969 and 1970, was asked what he thought about using FBI personnel to do committee investigative work.

"The FBI is the worst place in the world to get investigators," Mikva said. "It distorts the separation of power that ought to exist." It makes the FBI the "sacred cow not only of the executive branch, but the legislative branch as well," he added.

The FBI has recently been

criticized by Sen. Edmund S. Muskie (D-Maine) for surveillance of Earth Day activities in which the Senator participated last year; by Rep. Henry Ruess (D-Wis) for collecting information about his daughter; and by House Majority Leader Hale Boggs (D-La) for allegedly tapping the phones of members of Congress.

Most committees doing investigative work rely on their regular professional staff or get assistance from the General Accounting Office (GAO), an agency of the legislative branch. The House Appropriations Committee uses the GAO in addition to the FBI and other executive branch agency investigators.

According to Paul Wilson, staff director and chief clerk of the Appropriations Committee, the three full-time in-

vestigators are selected by the FBI at the request of the committee.

"Mr. Hoover know the kind of men we need," Wilson said. They are paid by the committee, with salaries ranging from \$27,700 to \$31,800. They also have a free hand to select additional investigators from the FBI and other agencies to assist them, to screen the other investigators and to determine the procedures and direction of the investigation.

### Checks Budget Request

The other 25 agents currently working on special projects for the committee were requested and screened by the three full-time investigators.

The House Appropriations Committee is responsible for examining all budget requests of the Federal Government, which includes such agencies of the executive branch as the FBI and the Justice Department.

Mahon, chairman of the committee since 1964, said that there was no written agreement between the committee and the FBI agents who work for the committee that would bind them to secrecy concerning any information they collected.

All FBI agents, however, do take a loyalty oath to the Government when they are hired. "Our investigators are men of responsibility," said Wilson, "but everyone is human."