

F.B.I. AGENTS VITAL TO A HOUSE PANEL

Appropriations Unit Uses 3 Full Time for Inquiries

By The Congressional Quarterly

WASHINGTON, April 24—At a time when unusual criticism of J. Edgar Hoover and the Federal Bureau of Investigation has come from ranking members of Congress, a study reveals that a powerful House committee depends heavily on the bureau.

Twenty-eight agents of the bureau are assigned as investigators to the staff of the House Appropriations Committee.

Three of the men, on leave of absence from the F.B.I., serve as the only full-time investigators employed by the committee. They are in charge of directing all investigations requested by the committee into the financial affairs of Government agencies and personnel. The 25 other agents are currently assigned to the committee for special case work.

A check of all committees showed that House Appropriations was the only one now using F.B.I. personnel for investigative work. A bureau spokesman confirmed the findings.

The study also showed a sharp difference of opinion on who should investigate for committees.

"These men [F.B.I. agents] are real pros," said Representative George H. Mahon, Texas Democrat who is chairman of the House Appropriations Committee. "We've never had the slightest difficulty."

On the other hand, Mr. Mahon said, when staff members of committees handle investigations, "there is the problem of investigations becoming a witch hunt with investigators knowing what they want to find before they begin the investigations," Mr. Mahon said.

'Worst Place' to Mikva

Representative Abner J. Mikva, Democrat of Illinois who was under surveillance by the 113th Military Intelligence Group for his opposition to the Vietnam war during parts of 1969 and 1970, was asked what he thought about using F.B.I. personnel to do commit-

tee investigative work.

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

The bureau has recently been criticized by Senator Edmund S. Muskie, Democrat of Maine, for surveillance of Earth Day activities in which the Senator participated last year; by Representative Henry S. Ruess, Democrat of Wisconsin, for collecting information about his daughter; and by the House majority leader, Hale Boggs of Louisiana, 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

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Accounting Office, an agency of the legislative branch. The House Appropriations Committee uses the accounting office in addition to the F.B.I. and other executive branch agency investigators.

According to Paul Wilson, staff director and chief clerk of the Appropriations Committee, the three agents working full-time as investigators are selected by the F.B.I. at the request of the committee. "Mr. Hoover knows the kind of men we need," Mr. Wilson said.

The three agents are on three-year leave of absence from the bureau and are paid by the committee, with salaries ranging from \$27,700 to \$31,800.

Once a written request for information has been made by the committee, the three agents have a free hand to select additional investigators from the F.B.I. and other agencies to

assist them, to screen the other investigators and to determine the procedures and direction of the investigation.

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