

Wife Encouraged LBJ to Bow Out

By Drew Pearson

The general public doesn't know it, but J. Edgar Hoover has been lobbying effectively on Capitol Hill to put all police training in American cities under the FBI if they get any funds from the Federal Government.

Under the law, Hoover is forbidden to engage in politics. He is supposed to be under the jurisdiction of the Attorney General and keep aloof from Capitol Hill. Despite this, he has sent FBI agents up to key Congressmen to persuade them to give the FBI training jurisdiction over local city police. The "safe streets" bill allocates a certain amount of Federal funds to help local law enforcement, and Hoover has demanded that no city get these funds unless the FBI has training authority over its police.

This runs counter to the Constitutional right of cities and states to handle their own local problems, and is also opposed by Attorney General Ramsey Clark and many Senators. Clark contends the FBI has enough to do without supervising local police training. Many Congressmen argue that the United States must not fall into the European pattern of a national police force, similar to the Deuxieme Bureau of France or the KGB of Soviet Russia.

The Hoover proposal is also opposed by the International Association of Police Chiefs,

which has done an excellent job of correlating police training throughout the United States and Canada. Quinn Tamm, executive director of the International Association of Chiefs of Police, is a former assistant director of the FBI who nevertheless has incurred the wrath of J. Edgar Hoover because Tamm wants to keep police training local.

Various states have built up excellent training programs for their police, including California, Michigan, New Jersey and Connecticut. Florida, despite the meddling of Gov. Claude Kirk, who put the Wackenhut Detective Agency in charge of crime, has also made excellent progress.

Florida police are now taught the problems of sociology and race relations through the Florida Institute of Law Enforcement at St. Petersburg Junior College. The FBI, in contrast, has long been an un-integrated organization. Only recently have a few Negro agents been admitted.

Leading police chiefs resent the fact that Hoover discriminates against police officials who maintain their independence of the FBI. If they are too independent, they say, Hoover refuses to process their fingerprints or cooperate regarding information on interstate crime.

The FBI operates two big computers in Washington which correlate information on stolen guns, stolen autos

and wanted persons. This is a very important clearing house of crime information, which does not mean a national police force. However, Hoover has been known to withhold this information from police chiefs whom he considers too independent.

Opposed to Hoover on FBI training have been some of the top police chiefs of the Nation. Supporting him has been Sen. John McClellan (D-Ark.), a powerful member of the Senate Judiciary Committee, and Rep. Emanuel Celler, the Brooklyn Democrat who heads the House Judiciary Committee.

Ladybird Said No

The person who had most to do with LBJ's momentous decision not to run again was his wife. She had talked to him about not running for at least two years.

Frank Bell, former secretary to ex-Senator Clarence Dill of Washington State, tells how Ladybird viewed the subject during a visit at the LBJ Ranch.

Bell, incidentally, knew Johnson when Sen. Dill was in the House of Representatives and when Lyndon Johnson was secretary to Rep. Dick Kleberg of Texas. At that time Bell reported to Dill: "There's a young fellow over there in Congressman Kleberg's office who's going places. A tall young fellow named Johnson."

Last summer Bell was down in Texas and dropped over to

the LBJ Ranch, where he found the President receiving a long line of visitors. Bell went over to sit with Ladybird under a tree.

"This time next year I suppose you'll all be in the thick of a hot campaign," he told her.

"Not if I have anything to do with it," said the lady whose opinions carry considerable weight with the President. "If I can prevent it, Lyndon will not run again. It will kill him. He couldn't last another four years. I've got Coolidge and Truman on my side. They withdrew. Lyndon drives himself so hard. He works until midnight every night. I don't think he could last another four years and I am going to make sure he doesn't try it."

This column has reported that the President's health appears to be good.

LBJ Listened

Another friend who influenced the President to bow out was Horace Busby, his favorite speech writer.

Last month when the President was particularly aggrieved over the public misunderstanding of his motives, the failure of Congress to cooperate on taxes, and unfair attacks on him in the press, Busby encouraged the President to make an early decision, even wrote the historic speech in which he bowed out.

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