

G.O.P. Leaders Involved in Election Drive Say Ad

By ROBERT M. SMITH
Special to The New York Times

WASHINGTON, Nov. 20 — Republican leaders involved in the effort to re-elect President Nixon are saying that the Administration plans to ask J. Edgar Hoover, the 76-year-old director of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, to retire this winter.

What these politicians are saying privately parallels information circulating within a small circle of Administration officials in and outside of the Justice Department. According to this information, Mr. Hoover will be asked to retire in January.

Both Congressional and Justice Department sources report that the Administration had in

fact arranged for Mr. Hoover to retire last spring but the idea was given up when Representative Hale Boggs of Louisiana, the Democratic leader in the House, charged that the F.B.I. was tapping the telephones of Congressmen. The decision was that the director should not leave while he was under fire.

Argument for Leaving

It is not known whether Mr. Hoover will respond favorably to the idea of retirement after running the bureau for 47 years.

According to reliable sources, Administration officials may attempt to persuade him by arguing that if Mr. Nixon loses in November, Mr. Hoover is sure to be dismissed by the

Democrats. Their argument would be: Would you rather not retire now when we can send you off with great ceremonial honor and when we can pick your successor?

Some Republican leaders, particularly those concerned with the effort to attract the youth vote, believe that Mr. Hoover's continuation in office would be a serious political handicap for their party in 1972. They say that he not only presents the image of a superannuated bureaucrat but is regarded on many college campuses as the head of a repressive and overly inquisitive Federal police.

Some of these politicians believe that his departure will be worked out so that any blame that conservatives place

on the Administration will rest on Attorney General John N. Mitchell rather than President Nixon.

May Quit in January

If their expectation is correct, it reinforces other reports that Mr. Mitchell will resign in January to direct the Republican Presidential campaign.

Mr. Mitchell is under increasing political pressure to leave the Justice Department. Already, political observers are saying, there is an evident need for someone with authority to make central decisions in the campaign and coordinate the efforts of various citizens committees, the Republican National Committee and some White House officials who con-

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 21, 1971

Administration Plans to Ask Hoover to Retire This Winter

cern themselves largely with political matters.

In addition, Mr. Mitchell's duties as Attorney General may come to compete for time and energy with his political responsibilities. And there may be ethical problems raised by one man holding the two jobs, whether his direction of the campaign is formal or informal.

Changes in Structure

Reports of the Administration's determination to ask Mr. Hoover to step down have circulated widely enough so that people, inside and outside the Government, who are eager to see him leave are telling newsmen that further negative press reports about the F.B.I. may delay or stop his retirement.

Recently, Mr. Hoover has

made a number of changes in the hierarchy of his agency. Whether this is related to the plan for his retirement in January and whether he even knows of that plan are unclear.

He forced the retirement in October of William C. Sullivan, one of two assistant directors. In November he appointed 66-year-old Alex Rosen to take Mr. Sullivan's place.

He also recently demoted Charles D. Brennan, who for the last year headed the bureau's sensitive Domestic Intelligence Division, and named Edward S. Miller of the bureau's Internal Inspection Division to fill the job, at least temporarily.

In September, James H. Gale, who was the bureau's

chief organized-crime fighter, retired. Still earlier, in July, Mr. Hoover appointed W. Mark Felt, the 58-year-old head of the Internal Inspection Division, to the No. 3 job in the bureau. This caused speculation that Mr. Hoover had settled on the man he would like to succeed him.

In recent months, the F.B.I. has been the object of some criticism. Representative Boggs demanded last April that Mr. Hoover resign, accusing him and the bureau of tapping Congressional telephones and stationing agents on campuses to spy on students and faculty members. He was subsequently criticized for presenting meager evidence to support the wire-tapping charge.

Senator George McGovern,

Democrat, of South Dakota, has accused Mr. Hoover of trying to destroy the career of an airline pilot who had been critical of the bureau's handling of a hijacking, and Senator Edmund S. Muskie, Democrat of Maine, has contended that the bureau conducted widespread surveillance on Earth Day last year.

Last month it was disclosed that Mr. Hoover had severed direct ties with the Central Intelligence Agency a year and half ago because of a disagreement with the agency. And a recent conference on the F.B.I. at Princeton University concluded by urging Congress to consider "a national commission of inquiry" that would look into the work of the bureau.