

House Security Unit Fighting for Its Life

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By Mary Russell

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The House Internal Security Committee, which these days isn't feeling very secure, fended off a challenge to its survival yesterday but will shortly face another.

The controversial committee charged with investigating Communists and other subversives has fallen into disfavor since its 1950s heyday when, known as the House Un-American Activities Committee, it romped through a series of well-publicized Red-hunting investigations.

Yesterday, as in the past, a small band of liberal Democrats attempted to defeat a routine floor resolution giving the committee \$475,000 in addition to the \$250,000 each committee automatically receives each session for staff salaries.

They lost, 247 to 86.

But a more serious challenge is in store when the House takes up a proposal to restructure its entire committee system.

A committee reform unit headed by Rep. Richard Bolling (D-Mo.) has recommended that the Internal Security Committee be abolished and its jurisdiction transferred to the Government Operations Committee.

Internal Security Committee Chairman Richard Ichord, also of Missouri, he vowed to fight.

In a letter to Bolling, Ichord said the transfer "does not give full assurance to the Congress that the work in the internal security field... will be pursued continuously and vigorously."

He promised to offer an amendment to retain his com-

mittee and expand its mandate to matters relating to treason, espionage and classified information.

But the proposal to abolish Ichord's committee appears to be one Bolling proposal that has wide support among House Democrats.

In yesterday's attempt to cut off funds, Rep. Robert F. Drinan (D-Mass.), who admits he went on the committee to effect its abolition charged that the committee keeps files on hundreds of thousands of Americans and the files are made available to any member of Congress and federal agency wanting to see them. "Even President Nixon has recommended we do something about privacy. How can you justify funding the House Internal Security Committee, which violates the basic right of privacy?" Drinan said.

Rep. Phil Burton (D-Calif.) suggested depriving the committee of its "scissors, scotch tape and glue," since he charged the staff mostly "sits around and clips" Socialist, Communist and left-wing newspapers.

But committee member Roger Zion (R-Ind.) said he was "amazed at the efforts of the Communist Party to get us abolished."



By Linda Wheeler—The Washington Post

Rep. Richard H. Ichord, left, listens to testimony from Richard M. Roberts, deputy assistant attorney general in the Justice Department's Tax Division, during House hearing on executive branch domestic intelligence operations.