

Leak Probe May Reach 400 People

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By Richard L. Lyons

Chairman John J. Flynt (D-Ga.) said yesterday his House ethics committee may have to interview 300 to 400 persons in its effort to find out how the secret House intelligence report was leaked for publication.

But he quickly added that the figure "might be one or 1,000, I just don't know." If the first witness admitted giving the draft report to CBS correspondent Daniel Schorr who passed it on for publication in the New York weekly, The Village Voice, that would be the end of it, Flynt said.

Flynt appeared before a House Administration subcommittee to ask for \$350,000 to conduct the inquiry which the House last month ordered him to make. Flynt told the subcommittee he didn't know how much money he would need, but that he would spend as little as possible. The subcommittee put off a vote until today at earliest.

His budget anticipates having 10 investigators working 110 days each at \$100 a day, and 1,000 hours of legal work at \$75 per hour. Travel, per diem expenses and supplies make up the balance.

The people to be interviewed would include the staff of the House intelligence committee, which has been disbanded and its employees spread around the country. It presumably would also include Schorr,

the 13 committee members, and executive branch officials who had access to the report.

Several subcommittee members asked Flynt why he couldn't conduct the inquiry with his own staff by filling 21 vacancies, each to be paid up to \$37,800 a year. He plans to hire as investigators retired federal employees, including former FBI agents, who could be paid the difference between their pension and this ceiling.

Flynt said he couldn't hire the staff he wants at these rates. By obtaining the special contractual authority he seeks, the committee could pay more money in a shorter time—\$75 an hour for lawyers and \$100 a day for investigators.

Rep. Frank Thompson (D-N.J.), chairman of the subcommittee that will pass on the budget, said Flynt ought to finance the inquiry from his own staff funds—and use any extra funds to pay the legal costs of subpoenaed witnesses who can't afford to hire a lawyer. Congress has not done this before.

Rep. Michael Harrington (D-Mass.), subject of a brief abortive inquiry by the ethics committee last year for releasing secret information, urged Thompson's subcommittee to cut Flynt's budget. He said that the inquiry should never have been ordered in the first place, and that the ethics committee is the wrong investigator because nearly half its members serve on the Armed Services Committee which failed to police the intelligence agencies. But it appeared likely from questioning that the subcommittee will approve the request for funds.