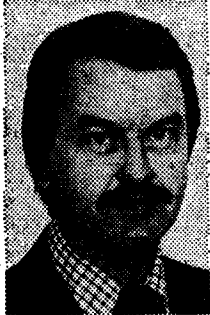


The Federal Diary

Intelligence Agencies Kept Busy



By
Mike
Causey

Many of the nation's senior intelligence officials did double duty this week, monitoring crop, economic and political conditions in Russia, Soviet-bloc nations and Red China while remaining glued to their office radio sets.

Object of their attention was the hearings of the Senate Intelligence Committee that were carried live by WETA-FM.

Normally federal agencies send people to Capitol Hill to observe hearings concerning their operations. And the CIA, NSA, DIA, State Intelligence and others undoubtedly had people in the audience taking notes.

But due to the sensitive nature of the hearings, and the fact that some of the points dealt with illegal or questionable domestic activities of the secret services, a low profile was decided upon, so live monitors were kept to a minimum.

Fortunately for need-to-know intelligence agency brass, the educational station, which often covers important congressional hearings, filled the gap and gave them the best listening post imaginable. Some officials at the CIA reportedly taped the Senate hearings, both for future reference and also for transmission to overseas CIA outposts where many people are as interested in what is going on in Washington these days as they are about happenings in their assigned intelligence targets.

Annuity Cutback: Administration officials say it will be several weeks before legislation is sent to Congress to eliminate the 1 per cent the government adds to each cost-of-living raise for retirees, ex-military personnel and their survivors.

Officials doubt that Congress — if it approves the plan at all — would act quickly enough to affect the amount of a

cost-of-living raise (of 5.4 per cent) due retirees March 1.

That increase will first show up in checks mailed for April delivery and Congress isn't likely to tamper with it, even if it does decide to approve the Ford administration pension cutback.

Donald N. Ledbetter has told his home branch folks back in Memphis that he will seek re-election this year for another two-year term as president of the National Association of Postal Supervisors.

National Treasury Employees Union beat the American Federation of Government Employees in a representation election this week at Customs Service headquarters here. NTEU now represents 13,000 Customs workers in eight of the service's nine regions, plus the national office.

Postal employees now are guaranteed a 7.25-cent-an-hour raise in May, thanks to the cost-of-living escalator clause in their union contract with the U.S. Postal Service. If living costs go up in the next few months, so will the value of the raise. It's one of six automatic cost-of-living increases in the contract which covers 600,000 workers.