

Wheat Probe Seeks 'Mr. Smith'

WASHINGTON — (AP) — The FBI and the Central Intelligence Agency are looking into the telephone calls last summer from a "Mr. Smith" who told a Kansas City trade magazine details of U.S.-Soviet grain transactions.

Officials of the Milling & Baking News said today federal agents had interviewed the magazine's editor, Morton Sosland, a few days before he published an account of Mr. Smith's calls on Oct. 3.

The FBI here also has interviewed at least one news-

man who has covered the U.S.-Soviet grain deal. The agents discussed Mr. Smith and the calls made to Kansas City.

CIA Agent

About \$1 billion worth of U.S. grain, mostly wheat, was sold to the Russians this year. Sen. George McGovern and others have said the Agriculture Department withheld information from farmers, causing some to sell grain at lower prices when they could have waited until the market went up because of the huge sales.

The Milling & Baking

News is a weekly magazine which circulates mainly to the grain trade and allied interests.

Two officials of the magazine, who asked not to be identified by name, said in a telephone interview that a CIA agent had visited with Sosland once before publication of the article and that FBI agents had been in the office "several times."

Provided Tips

According to Sosland's article, a series of telephone calls was received from a man who initially identified himself as "John Smith" of the London Financial Times.

Later, after Sosland found the London newspaper employed no such expert, Mr.

Smith said he was an international grain spy.

The calls began on July 17, before the size of the U.S. wheat sales became generally known. For nearly a month in successive calls Sosland said, Mr. Smith provided tips pointing to a much larger sale than anyone publicly knew at the time.

Sosland said he did not publish Mr. Smith's tips at the time because they seemed fantastic. As details of the wheat deals became known generally in early August, however, much of the caller's information was verified.

A week ago, Rep. Roman C. Pucinski (D-Ill.) said the calls by Mr. Smith possibly were made by a USDA employe "with a conscience" who decided to inform the public by contacting the magazine.

Crop Shortages

Pucinski also says the Agriculture Department held back earlier reports by the CIA indicating serious crop shortages in Russia, thus pointing logically to a large wheat sale by the United States.

Those allegations have been denied by department officials. No one in the agency, they say, knew the scope of the grain sale in advance and no inside tips were passed to the private grain trade by government employes.