

F.B.I. Ends Compilation of Data On Those in Congressional Races

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WASHINGTON, Oct. 27—L **Continued From Page 1, Col. 2**
Patrick Gray 3d, the acting director of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, disclosed today that for 22 years the bureau had been compiling "biographical data" on major Congressional candidates. He said he was ending the practice immediately.

In a prepared statement, Mr. Gray said that the program has been a routine part of the bureau's Congressional relations program and was later used to assist the F.B.I. in investigative leads regarding threats to members of Congress. He explained that he was terminating the program to prevent its "misinterpretation" as investigations of the candidates themselves, including incumbents.

Mr. Gray said that under the program, which had "just come to my attention," agents at F.B.I. headquarters here had since 1950, "as a matter of routine practice gathered biographical data on major candidates for the House of Representatives and the Senate."

He said that he was putting an end to the practice after

Continued on Page 13, Column 1

concluding that "such a program is not essential to F.B.I. operations," and that it could be "misinterpreted easily as a program to investigate Congressmen and Congressional candidates."

In the future, Mr. Gray added, the only instances in which the F.B.I. would investigate Congressmen would be those in which a member was alleged to have violated a Federal law or was being considered for a to-level Government appointment, both of which are part of the bureau's normal role.

Files at Headquarters

Mr. Gray's statement did not make clear, however, whether the files on Representatives and Senators already assembled at the bureau's headquarters would be destroyed. An F.B.I. spokesman refused to comment, saying he could not go beyond Mr. Gray's remarks. Attempts to reach Mr. Gray were unsuccessful.

The acting director's statement said that, while the program was in effect, agents had been authorized to gather data only from "readily available published sources" such as newspapers, magazines, campaign literature and "various reference publications."

The initial purpose of the program, Mr. Gray said, was "to provide briefing material for F.B.I. officials who might desire it before making a call on a newly elected Congressman or Senator."

It later became apparent, he said, that such information

would also be useful "in following investigative leads" arising from threats or offerings against members or members-elect of Congress.

Today's announcement was the first official acknowledgment that such files have actually existed, but critics of J. Edgar Hoover, the late F.B.I. director, contended for years that the bureau kept such files. The critics alleged that the files contained at least some information not readily available from published sources, for potential use in influencing Congressional votes on the bureau's annual appropriations.

Mr. Gray said he first became aware that the data-gathering was going on after he received a report that an F.B.I. agent in Lorain County, Ohio, had made "outside inquiries" into the background of John M. Ryan, the Democratic candidate for Congress in Ohio's 13th District.

He said that an internal administrative investigation was under way to determine why the agent had not confined his research to the approved published sources.

Most of the information assembled under the program just terminated was gathered by agents stationed in Washington, Mr. Gray said. But he added that F.B.I. field offices had occasionally "been requested, by means of a routing slip directive, to assist by providing information (on Congressional incumbents and candidates) that was readily available from local files and local publications."