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CHARLES W. BATES
Back in S.F.

SFChronicle
**New Chief
Of FBI's
S.F. Office**

Charles W. Bates, once again the special agent in charge of the FBI's San Francisco office, declared yesterday that he thought "great strides" were being made in the battle against airplane hijackers.

He said a "high percentage" of U.S. airport loading gates now have metal detectors and that "very shortly, we hope, all loading gates will be checked."

In addition, said Bates, all but one of the 34 or 35 hijackings in the past year have been solved.

SHOOTING

He also defended the FBI

shooting of the plane's tires in the recent Southern Airlines hijacking — "it just didn't work out as well as we hoped."

Bates, who was the head man here from 1967 to 1970 before going on to become assistant director of the General Investigative Division at FBI headquarters in Washington, said that closing off Cuba as "a haven for hijackers" could only have a beneficial effect.

He said it appears that Cuba might prosecute the most recent hijackers to arrive there, and he said there are some other hijackers living there.

PREFERENCE

And he recalled that one hijacker returned to the U.S. saying that "he'd rather be in jail in the U.S. than walking the streets in Cuba. We were happy to comply."

He said he has seen no "basic" changes in operation of the FBI since the beginning of the administration of acting director Patrick Gray.

"As far as I know everything is running well, and Mr. Gray is easy to deal with."

Bates said he had been trying to get back to San Francisco almost since he left and that he envisioned — at this time — no big changes in the running of the office here.