

Gray's Newest FBI Shakeup

Washington

Acting director L. Patrick Gray III has shaken the FBI again, transferring several veteran Washington officials to posts elsewhere.

The action, which came in the form of brief transfer orders delivered last week, was taken by some senior agents as a "purge" of persons associated with the late director J. Edgar Hoover.

But Gray, back at his desk after recuperating from surgery, denied any intent to eliminate Hoover men.

He said all the new assignments were promotions that will enhance the agents' careers while streamlining the bureau's Washington operation.

Although Gray has taken previous innovative measures such as opening special agent ranks to women, his latest move appeared to fortify the now widely accepted impression that he will be nominated for a full term as the bureau's head.

The eight newest reassignments will shrink still further the FBI's crime research division, once the core of the bureau's press, public and Congressional relations activity. Gray, already in command of press and Congressional relations, said the division is overstaffed.

"The better agents all aspire" to line jobs out in the field "where the FBI makes its record," Gray said. Only those who don't want to leave "feathered nests" in Washington will look on the transfers as a purge, he added.

REACTION

Reaction within the bureau ranged from that of one agent who Gray said thanked him for the promotion to that of Inspector James Bland, a 30-year veteran who retired after being assigned to head the Albany, N.Y., office.

In between there were agents who began to weigh retirement but who were un-

easy about complaints of a "purge."

"I deeply resent the purge idea," said one veteran who asked not to be identified. "I definitely do not feel like a purgee."

Gray, responding to complaints of some veterans about the youth and power of his small personal staff, emphasized that he issued the transfer orders personally after studying, during his convalescence from an intestinal operation, a management study designed to promote a more orderly "career planning pattern" for agents.

ORDERS

He said he gave the orders directly to Mark Felt, long-time bureau special assistant.

As for fears of a sweep of Hoover loyalists, Gray said, "I'd be foolish to try that." If nominated by President Nixon and confirmed by the Senate, "I expect always to be surrounded by Hoover men," he said.

Washington Post Service