

SFChronicle JAN 26 1977

Kelley Says He'll Retire In 11 Months

Washington

FBI director Clarence Kelley plans to retire after 11 more months in office, it was disclosed yesterday.

In a letter to Attorney General-designate Griffin Bell, Kelley said, "I intend to remain as FBI director until Jan. 1, 1978, at which time I will retire."

During this period, Kelley said, "I hope procedures will be devised to choose my successor and I will assist in this process in order that a smooth transition is effected."

The Justice Department released the letter, dated Monday, shortly after Senator John Danforth (Rep-Mo.) said that he had learned of Kelley's plan to retire by the end of the year.

If he remains in office through October, Kelley becomes eligible for a considerable pension increase.

The department also issued a brief statement saying that Bell "will set in motion a procedure for the orderly transfer of the directorship of the bureau."

The statement said Bell recognizes that "he has no legal authority to dismiss director Kelley."

A new federal law sets a ten-year term for the FBI director. But there are legal questions about whether a president could replace an FBI director who had served less than ten years if he chose to do so.

Kelley said he was spelling out his intentions because he thought it would be a good idea to clear up the confusion.

A former FBI agent himself and the police chief of Kansas City for 12 years, Kelley became director of the bureau in July, 1973.

He has been praised for doing away with the autocratic rule of the late J. Edgar Hoover, but criticized for moving too slowly to correct wrongdoing of the Hoover era.

Associated Press