

Rep. Gross Assails Kennedy Handling Of Otepka Wiretap

see also State Dep't file

WASHINGTON, Dec. 30 (AP) — Representative H. R. Gross, Republican of Iowa, said today that the Kennedy Administration "either approved or condoned" wiretapping in a 1963 investigation of a now dismissed State Department employee.

In a letter to J. Edgar Hoover, Director of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, Mr. Gross referred to the long pending case of Otto Otepka.

Mr. Otepka was dismissed in 1963 as the State Department's chief security evaluator on charges that he provided unauthorized material to the counsel for the Senate Internal Security subcommittee and framed questions to be put to Mr. Otepka's superiors in the subcommittee's inquiry into the department security practices. Mr. Otepka's case still is under appeal and he remained on the payroll.

Testimony before the subcommittee in November, 1963, showed that Mr. Otepka's phone had been tapped after his superiors suspected that he was supply unauthorized material to J. G. Sourwine, the subcommittee counsel.

The Gross letter to Mr. Hoover released by the Congressman's office followed earlier correspondence in which Mr. Hoover asserted that extensive wiretapping by the FBI during the Kennedy Administration had been approved by the then Attorney General Robert F. Kennedy. Mr. Kennedy denied this.

Representative Gross wrote that the Otepka case indicates "the fact that there was wiretapping and eavesdropping during the Kennedy Administration that had no connection with the F.B.I., but apparently did have the approval of the highest political appointees of the Kennedy Administration."

"The fact that this was either approved or condoned in early 1963 by the Kennedy Administration would seem to give further support to your statements," he added.