

# 2 Justice Dept. Officials Criticize FBI's Hoover

Des Moines, Iowa

Two Justice Department officials say Federal Bureau of Investigation Director J. Edgar Hoover is "a separate entity unto himself" who should have retired ten years ago.

The statements were made Thursday before a group of Drake University law students by Robert Murphy, deputy chief of the department's civil rights division, and Mike Abel, chief of the division of firearms and explosives.

According to a Justice Department spokesman, the two agents have subsequently said they were not quoted correctly.

The Justice Department spokesman told the United Press in Washington that Abel and Murphy have discussed the UPI report on their statements with Attorney General John M. Mitchell's office and denied making the quoted remarks.

"The quotes are not accurate. They certainly do not reflect the views of the department. All three Department

of Justice representatives have been directed to submit reports to the attorney general regarding this matter," the department said in a formal statement.

Murphy said Hoover, 76, probably should have retired "10 years ago" and Abell agreed. Murphy said he thinks Hoover will remain as FBI director until the bureau's new headquarters building in Washington is

completed.

"They'll probably name it the Hooves Building," Murphy said, "and he could fittingly retire then."

Abel was sharply critical of Hoover's actions concerning the alleged plot to kidnap presidential adviser Henry Kissinger. He said Hoover made a "premature" announcement of the plot.

"I think this severely damaged the investigation at that point and hurt trial chances," Abell said. "We can assume that the information was being received from an inside source, and we can also assume that when Hoover made the announcement, the source dried up."

"The FBI is a separate entity unto itself, and Mr. Hoover is a separate entity unto himself," Abell said.

A third Justice official — William Rehnquist, an assistant attorney general — went to bat for Hoover. Rehnquist the only one of the three who is a political appointee, said Hoover had built the FBI into what it is today.

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