

FBI Access to Private Bank Records Charged

WASHINGTON — (UPI) — Columnist Jack Anderson gave the Senate Banking Committee what he said were FBI memos on political activists Jane Fonda, Benjamin Spock and Floyd McKissick today to prove that the FBI "has virtually unlimited access to private bank account records.

The columnist testified that informants inside the FBI have told him that the practice of examining checking accounts of people under surveillance is widespread.

Anderson testified in favor of legislation which would require a subpoena or a customer's consent before a financial institution could disclose their records to government investigators.

"Of course, the bankers tell us they would never do such a thing without the ne-

cessary legal papers — usually a subpoena," Anderson said. "But I can testify that many bankers informally cooperate with the FBI, and I can document it."

The purpose of the bills was supported by the American Bankers Association. ABA spokesman Rex J. Morthland of the People Bank and Trust Co. of Selma, Ala., said People's financial records "must not be available for speculative exploration or fishing expeditions."

Anderson said the FBI records of Miss Fonda and McKissick carried notations saying subpoenas would have to be obtained if the bank records were to be used in public. That showed, he said, that the information had been obtained without a subpoena.

Sen. William Proxmire (D

Wis.) said he wasn't convinced subpoenas should be required.

But Harvard law professor Arthur R. Miller argued that people would be less likely to contribute to controversial causes or subscribe to controversial magazines if every check they wrote could be examined by the FBI.

Proxmire said FBI investigations might be thwarted if people under investigation had to be told in advance that their check accounts were to be scrutinized. He said a bank official suspected of embezzlement might "flee the country, cover his tracks" if he were tipped off.

The Justice Department and the Treasury opposed the proposed legislation, contending it would "seriously impair" criminal, tax and regulatory investigations."

Anderson said FBI files on political figures are sent to the White House. "Let's call it by its right name, political dirt," he said.

"The majority of people who are kept under FBI surveillance are merely non-conformists," he said. "They are people who commit no crime and are not likely to. They merely belong to groups or support causes that the FBI doesn't like."