

Hints GOP

Sabotage

Examiner News Services

WASHINGTON — Sen. Edmund S. Muskie says his campaign for the Democratic presidential nomination was riddled with an "astounding series" of incidents of apparent espionage and sabotage.

Though sidestepping accusations against specific individuals, the Maine Democrat and his staff suggested yesterday that Republicans were to blame.

Muskie said he has not ruled out the possibility of filing suit against the Committee for the Re-election of the President and certain White House officials linked in published reports of alleged sabotage.

The catalog of occurrences labeled suspicious by the Muskie staff peaked during the period the senator was considered the front-runner for the nomination subsequently won by Sen. George McGovern.

The incidents dropped off

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when Muskie's campaign faltered.

The list released by the Muskie staff included possible cases of wiretapping, stolen documents, forged campaign literature, false news releases, and bogus phone calls arousing voters in the middle of the night.

The list was prefaced with the admonition that the incidents had not been thoroughly investigated and were "not intended at this time as charges against any individual or group."

John T. McEvoy, the senator's administrative assistant, said the incidents "were not undertaken in the spirit of fun. They were undertaken to destroy a candidate."

Muskie and McEvoy tied their own list of possible sabotage incidents to reports published earlier this week linking White House aide Kenneth W. Clawson and one-time GOP campaign worker James W. McCord to similar occurrences.

Clawson, deputy director of White House communications, was quoted as acknowledging that he wrote a letter accusing Muskie of condoning a racial slur against Americans of French-Canadian descent. Clawson later denied making the statement. Muskie had denied the incident mentioned in the letter.

Newsweek magazine this week reports that McCord, also under indictment in the Watergate case, once rented an office next to the Muskie campaign headquarters on K Street in Washington.

"If these reports are correct," McEvoy said, "they weren't there to measure the traffic on K Street. They were in there to listen."

Muskie has said published reports "suggest a political opposition which is ruthless and unprincipled."

The Muskie memo labeled these incidents as suspicious:

- During the New Hampshire primary campaign a number of Manchester, N.H., residents received middle-of-the-night phone calls from persons falsely identifying themselves as black canvassers of the Harlem for Muskie Committee "who were calling New Hampshire people to urge them to vote for Muskie because he would be so good for black people."

- "Several hundred other New Hampshire residents from all over the state complained of post-midnight

phone calls from alleged Muskie people . . ."

- Just prior to the Florida primary, a flyer appeared in parts of that state on Muskie stationery. It accused Sen. Henry M. Jackson of illicit sexual activity and made comparable allegations about Sen. Hubert Humphrey. It was of course bogus and was apparently designed to hurt Muskie, while tarring Jackson and Humphrey too."

- "Closely held" issue papers were printed verbatim in newspaper columns and their transmittal from Muskie headquarters was never explained. Other campaign documents disappeared mysteriously in August 1971.

- At least twice in 1971

raw polling data disappeared from the desk of Muskie's polling expert, and "an entire New Hampshire poll and a New Jersey poll were stolen."

- \$300 worth of liquor, a \$50 floral arrangement, cakes from a pastry shop and 200 pizzas arrived at a Muskie fund-raising dinner in Washington April 17, although no one in the Muskie organization had ordered them.

- The orders given the pilot of his plane were altered to cause Muskie to land at Salem, Ore.

- Muskie had to deliver a poor off-the-cuff speech at a \$250 a plate fund-raising dinner in Beverly Hills because floodlights had been raised at the last moment to shine directly into his eyes, preventing him from being able to read a prepared text.

- Potential big donors in California received letters on Muskie stationery saying he wanted support of his candidacy from small contributions "instead of the usual fat-cats."

A young woman, who was admitted to the Muskie press office after identifying herself as a student doing research, was later found to be employed by the Republican National Committee.

- Telephones in the offices of Muskie's Senate on air and water pollution may have been tapped in early November, 1971. As staff member Leon Billings wrote in a memo then, "There is something very strange going on with the telephones. The phone rings, we pick it up, there's nothing there but the sound of a phone ringing . . . Then it is answered and . . . you didn't call them and they didn't call you."