

Justice Department Asks F.B.I. Reason for Inquiry on Santarelli

Special to The New York Times

WASHINGTON, June 7—The Justice Department today asked the Federal Bureau of Investigation why an agent had questioned a newsman about what the head of another branch of the department had said in a speech.

Deputy Attorney General Lawrence Silberman sent the request to F.B.I. Director Clarence M. Kelley after the publication of a report that the bureau had gone to a newsman for a transcript of a speech made by Donald E. Santarelli, who has resigned as head of the Law Enforcement Assistance Administration.

"We're concerned about the appearance that it created when an agent questions a reporter about what a department official said," explained John W. Hushen, director of public information for the Justice Department.

"We want to be sure steps are taken so it doesn't happen again in that manner—so that kind of activity doesn't happen again," he said.

A spokesman for the bureau said the move had been made because there was concern in the "law enforcement family" about a speech Mr. Santarelli

made last Jan. 14 in Williamsburg, Va.

"It was curiosity that triggered us, nothing sinister," said George Quinn, a member of the bureau's External Affairs Division.

Mr. Quinn admitted that the bureau had not asked Mr. Santarelli's office for a transcript of the speech.

The interest by the bureau was apparently caused by a news release issued by the International Chiefs of Police criticizing Mr. Santarelli's speech, which, in one version of his prepared remarks, contained a reference to civilian review boards.

The newsman approached by the F.B.I. was Gus Edwards, a reporter with The Newport News Times Herald who covered the Williamsburg conference at which Mr. Santarelli spoke.

Mr. Santarelli resigned earlier this week following the publication of two interviews in which he was quoted as saying that government service had been cheapened by Watergate and that President Nixon should resign.

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U.S. APPEALS COURT LIMITS VOICE PRINTS

WASHINGTON, June 6 (AP) —The United States Court of Appeals here ruled today that voiceprints could not be introduced as evidence in criminal trials. It was the first Federal appellate ruling on voiceprints.

Judge Carl McGowan wrote for the court that whatever may be the promise of voiceprints, "voiceprint identification is not sufficiently accepted by the scientific community as a whole to form a basis for a jury's determination of guilt or innocence."

The opinion is binding only on Federal courts in the District of Columbia, but can be expected to carry weight elsewhere. Voiceprints, which produce a visual pattern of lines from a person's voice, were first used in trials in 1966.

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