

A Report on CIA and Watergate Is Released

Washington

The Central Intelligence Agency's knowledge of the activities of some of the Watergate burglars was more extensive than the agency has publicly acknowledged, according to a report by the Senate Watergate committee's minority staff released yesterday.

Testimony and documents provided to the staff by CIA officials and summarized in the report indicate that agency officials did not report to — and in one case tried to withhold from — Watergate investigators all they knew about the circumstances surrounding the break-in at the Democratic national headquarters on June 17, 1972.

Five former CIA officials or "contract employees," were later convicted in that case.

Three of them have also admitted their participation in the September, 1971, break-in at the office of Daniel Ellsberg's former psychiatrist.

The minority report, prepared at the request of Senator Howard H. Baker Jr. (Rep-Tenn.), the Watergate committee's vice chairman, also made several new disclosures that it said conflicted with last summer's public testimony before the committee by Richard M. Helms, former CIA director, and General Robert E. Cushman Jr., his former deputy.

The CIA's current director, William E. Colby, expressed concern in a letter

Fee Increase By State Bar Is Opposed

Sacramento

The Legislature was urged yesterday to deny an increase in membership fees from \$100 to \$145 that is sought by the State Bar of California.

Auditor General Harvey Rose said the nearly 50,000-member organization of attorneys sought the 45 percent fee boost as a "hedge" against inflation and to beef up its staff.

But in a report released by Assemblyman Vincent Thomas, (Dem-San Pedro) chairman of the Joint Legislative Audit Committee, the auditor general said the state bar failed to provide justification for the increase.

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to Baker that the 43-page report might lead to "unjustifiable conclusions that agency officers or employees were knowingly involved in the break-in . . . or subsequent coverups."

The document draws no such conclusions, although it does cite evidence indicating that agency officials were aware of attempts by E. Howard Hunt Jr., one of the Watergate burglars, to hire

a "retired lockpicker" from a group of former CIA employees.

The report also disclosed that Robert F. Bennett, head of a Washington public relations firm that employed Hunt after his retirement from the CIA, told an agency official less than a month after the Watergate break-in of his suspicions that Hunt and G. Gordon Liddy had been involved in it.

Bennett's company, Robert R. Mullen & Co., was then serving as a "cover" for two CIA agents stationed abroad.

The official to whom Bennett reported his belief was identified in the report as the Mullen company's "case officer."

The report notes that although Bennett, in the weeks following the break-in, "was supplying information to the CIA about many aspects of the Watergate incident and was at that time serving as liaison between Hunt and Liddy, there is no indication that these facts were disclosed to the FBI."

The report also details an effort by agency officials to keep from the FBI and the Watergate and other congressional committees information about a post-June 17 visit by a CIA employee to the home of James W. McCord Jr., a former CIA security officer who, while an employee of the Nixon re-election committee, was among those arrested at the Democratic party's headquarters.

The employee, Lee R. Pennington Jr., entered McCord's residence "shortly after the Watergate break-in," according to the report. "And destroyed documents which might show a link between McCord and the CIA."

It was not clear whether Pennington, an old friend of McCord's had gone to the suburban Maryland home on agency orders or of his own volition. Nevertheless, the report said, the CIA knew in June, 1972, that the visit had been made.

Two months later, when FBI agents asked about a "Mr. Pennington," the CIA's response "was to furnish information about a former employee with a similar name . . . and to withhold the name of Lee R. Pennington Jr.," the report said.