

# Hill Unit Probes Hiring of Burger Son



By  
Mike  
Causey

The House Manpower Subcommittee is quietly wrapping up an investigation that could reopen the controversy surrounding the appointment of Chief Justice Warren Burger's son to a top-paying career federal job.

Subcommittee investigators, this column has learned, have been at the General Services Administration for the past several weeks asking questions about the qualifications and selection of 38-year-old Wade Burger for a Grade 14 job in the GSA back in 1970. The position, special assistant to the assistant commissioner for space management, now pays \$26,671 a year.

The Burger story was first broken by the Norfolk Virginian-Pilot, which said his background and education did not merit such a high federal job.

A subsequent investigation by the Civil Service Commissions—which originally cleared Burger for the appointment—concluded that there were "discrepancies" in the background data Burger supplied as justifi-

cation for his appointment, and that he was not qualified for the job at that grade level "at the time of his appointment."

Specifically, CSC's own investigation into the Burger hiring showed, it said, that Burger had combined his and his wife's total income when he put down his salary for several years of private employment. During that period, the investigation showed, Burger actually made between \$2,000 and less than \$5,000 a year in real estate. Salary, along with education and work experience, is a factor federal agencies weigh when considering at what level to hire an individual. When Burger was hired four years ago, GS 14 had a starting salary of \$19,641.

Although CSC said Burger was not qualified for the Grade 14 job when he got it in 1970, it says he since had gained the experience to qualify for the job. While citing unnamed "specific discrepancies" in Burger's job application—believed to involve his status as a student at The American University—CSC concluded there was "insufficient evidence upon which to sustain a finding that Mr. Burger had made intentional false statements of material fact. Therefore, we consider the case closed."

The House subcommittee, an offshoot of the Post Office-Civil Service committee, does not consider the Burger case closed and could—if material devel-

oped warrants—request CSC to reopen it.

Investigators have been asking questions about the relationship between the Chief Justice and Robert L. Kunzig who headed the GSA at the time of Burger's appointment.

Kunzig, a political protege of Sen. Hugh Scott (R-Pa.), was named a judge of the U.S. Court of Claims the following year by President Nixon. Kunzig's appointment, at the \$42,500 a year level, is a lifetime job.

GSA has been rocked by charges from CSC's executive director Bernard Rosen that the agency operated for several years an illegal referral system which gave priority job placement to persons referred by politicians and political groups. A number of those recommendations—more than 200 according to CSC's closely guarded investigative report—came from Pennsylvania's GOP congressional delegation. GSA officials counter that CSC approved every one of the persons for federal employment at the time.

CSC has recommended that four top GSA officials be fired for their alleged involvement in the special job referral unit, and that several others be suspended for from 30 to 90 days without pay. The employees have counter-charged that CSC has no authority to order punishment for workers in other agencies and apparently are

planning to take CSC into federal court on the matter.

Until the GSA matter is settled—that is, whether CSC can order punishment for workers in other agencies—discipline has been delayed for officials in Housing and Urban Development and the Small Business Administration accused of allegedly operating similar job referral units.

**Expense Allowances:** The Senate has cleared and sent to the House legislation that would raise the government's per diem payment for traveling workers to a maximum of \$35. The present daily expense account rate maximum is \$25.

The bill, S. 3341, also raised mileage rates to 16 cents for employees who use their own cars on authorized official business. The General Services Administration would be given the authority to adjust rates twice yearly, if higher motoring costs warrant the change. The House is working on similar legislation and the new higher payments are expected to become law later this year.

**Personnel Jobs:** U.S. marshals office needs a Grade 11 position classification specialist and a personnel management specialist. Call Mr. Sidella in personnel.

**Grade 7 Secretary:** The Commission on White House Fellows has an opening at that level. Call 382-4661.