

# THE STATES-ITEM

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The States-Item prints the news impartially. It supports what it believes to be right. It opposes what it believes to be wrong, without regard to party politics.

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## FBI needs reform

J. Edgar Hoover, now 76, sheds like water criticism and repeated demands that he retire as director of the Federal Bureau of Investigation.

But the issue of Mr. Hoover's retirement is not so important as what comes afterward. There are indications that President Nixon understands this and intends to see that Mr. Hoover's successor does not create another kingdom which does not have to answer to Congress, or as a practical matter, to presidents.

Mr. Nixon apparently is preparing for the day when Mr. Hoover finally retires by weighing the possibility of a fixed term for the man who becomes the next director. There should be other safeguards as well. President Johnson made a grave mistake, we believe, in waiv-

ing the mandatory retirement age of 70.

In addition, the actions of the director and the policies of his office should be subject to review by Congress, as is the case with the Central Intelligence Agency.

Above all, some sort of limitation must be placed on the FBI's powers to spy on American citizens and those in public office. Mr. Hoover apparently owes his long tenure as much to the fear of reprisal as anything else. Nobody wants to tangle with the director and his army of investigators.

We would like to see the energies of the FBI concentrated where they would do the most good — areas such as organized crime and traffic in narcotics. We do not need an organization with a penchant for spying on the harmless activities of private citizens.