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F.B.I. POPULARITY FOUND SLIPPING

But Gallup Poll Says 85% Still View It Favorably

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WASHINGTON, Aug. 8—

The Federal Bureau of Investigation, despite its involvement in the Watergate scandal, is enjoying broad, but declining popularity, according to the latest Gallup Poll.

The pollsters discovered that 85 per cent of the people surveyed during the first week of July rated the F.B.I. "favorably" or "highly favorably."

When the late J. Edgar Hoover was bureau director, 84 per cent of the country put the F.B.I. at the top of the polling scale with a "highly" favorable rating, according to a 1965 survey.

Now as the new F.B.I. director, Clarence M. Kelley, tries to restore order to the agency rocked by the Watergate scandal, only 52 per cent of the public give the F.B.I. a "highly" favorable rating.

C.I.A. Ranked Lower

While the resignation of L. Patrick Gray 3d as acting director of the F.B.I. after disclosure of his involvement in the Watergate cover-up may have contributed to the agency's loss in popularity, the pollsters noted that enthusiasm for the F.B.I. had already been on the decline.

In August, 1970, 71 per cent of Americans who had been surveyed rated the agency "highly" favorable.

The latest Gallup survey also showed that the F.B.I. receives considerably more public acclaim than the Central Intelligence Agency.

Twenty-three per cent of those questioned gave the C.I.A.

a "highly favorable" rating, with 44 per cent rating it "mildly favorable."

The poll found that age or political affiliation made little difference in the findings on the C.I.A. But young adults, people living in the West and in the East and the college educated, had the most pronounced effect on the decline of the F.B.I.'s popularity.

Following are the results of the latest F.B.I. survey:

- Highly favorable....52 per cent
- Mildly favorable...33 per cent
- Mildly unfavorable..7 per cent
- Highly unfavorable..4 per cent
- No opinion.....4 per cent

"The view that the F.B.I. is a bulwark of the 'establishment' and that it has been too closely allied with the Nixon Administration are factors which have contributed to a decline in 'highly favorable' attitudes," the poll said.

The findings for the latest survey were based on interviews with 1,544 adults.