

SATURDAY, JUNE 29, 1968

Hoover Says McCarthy Tries To Mislead Public About F.B.I.

WASHINGTON, June 28 (AP) — J. Edgar Hoover, director of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, accused Senator Eugene J. McCarthy of Minnesota today of either trying to mislead the public or having "a woeful lack of knowledge" of how the F.B.I. operates.

Mr. Hoover's comments were contained in an introduction to the July issue of the bureau's monthly Law Enforcement Bulletin.

He did not mention Mr. McCarthy's name but said, "It has been alleged by a prominent candidate for the Presidency of the United States that the F.B.I. under my leadership operates autonomously and without proper control."

Mr. McCarthy has said several times that if elected he would remove Mr. Hoover.

The Senator said in a television interview April 21 that "any police agency in a democracy ought not to be kept under the control largely of one man to a point where it develops into a kind of fief reality, which is somewhat beyond criticism and outside judgment."

Although Mr. McCarthy said that he had no specific objections to Mr. Hoover, he advocated a fixed term of office for the bureau director and questioned the policy of permitting any director to remain so long "where you could have a great concentration of power."

Director Since '24

Mr. Hoover, 73 years old, has been the F.B.I. director since 1924, the only man who has held the job.

Mr. McCarthy was told of Mr. Hoover's statement as he awaited a luncheon with Vice President Humphrey at the home of Gov. William L. Guy of North Dakota in Bismarck.

"I've said he ought to be replaced," Senator McCarthy said. "I don't know if the F.B.I.'s gotten exactly autonomous. But the director has gotten to be almost sacred, and that shouldn't be."

"I don't even know how competent [the F.B.I.] is. How competent is it? The crime rate is going up. Is that because of or in spite of . . ."

He said that the Roman Catholic Church is "getting rid of its Cardinals at age 70."

Of the bureau, Senator McCarthy said, "We should have a look at it from the inside."

Asked whether he would prefer a new director to be chosen from within the bureau or from outside it, Mr. McCarthy said:

"I don't know — maybe it should be someone from the C.I.A.; they don't like the F.B.I. much."

Then . . . noticing a body guard nearby, he added, "Or maybe the Secret Service."

'Without Fear or Favor'

Mr. Hoover wrote that the bureau "has always met its responsibilities and discharged its duties without fear or favor, regardless of criticism and attacks, whatever the source."

He said that this must continue to be the policy and "consequently, all Americans should view with serious concern the announced intentions and threats by a political candidate, if elected, to take over and revamp the F.B.I. to suit his own personal whims and wishes."

He said that Mr. McCarthy's charge that the bureau under Mr. Hoover operated without proper control "is not true, and it denotes either a contrived effort to mislead the public or a woeful lack of knowledge of our governmental system of checks and balances."

"As most informed citizens know, there are definite limitations upon the F.B.I., its authority and its operations, all of which I consider most essential and which the F.B.I. has meticulously honored over the years," Mr. Hoover said.

He noted that the bureau, as part of the Justice Department, answered directly to the Attorney General and was subject to his control. Further, he said, bureau operations are scrutinized by the Bureau of the Budget, the General Accounting Office and the Appropriations Committees of the House and Senate.

He said:

"If there are those who disagree with the F.B.I. policy of vigorous enforcement of the law, protection of law-abiding citizens, preservation of the rights of all people, proper punishment for guilty law breakers, and the protection of our country from subversive elements and illegal forces, then let them admit this rather than make erroneous allegations which cannot be supported by facts."