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FBI Inquiry On Santarelli Talk Probed

The Justice Department yesterday asked FBI Director Clarence Kelley for a report on what led to a special agent's inquiries into a speech made last January by the head of the Law Enforcement Assistance Administration.

The FBI acknowledged that two months after LEAA Administrator Donald E. Santarelli, gave a speech at a crime conference in Williamsburg, Va., an agent questioned a Newport News, Va., newspaper reporter about how Santarelli deviated from his text, and what he said in an interview with newsmen.

Santarelli previously had challenged the accuracy of the FBI's national crime statistics, and in his speech he referred to a rising national crime rate. FBI officials said the inquiries in Williamsburg were intended to clear up confusion in the bureau over exactly what Santarelli said in the talk.

Santarelli resigned his \$40,000-a-year Justice Department post this week following the publication of two interviews in which he was quoted as criticizing the way in which President Nixon handled the Watergate scandals.

Justice Department officials said Deputy Attorney General Laurence Silberman had asked Kelley for a report on the incident.

"Our preliminary review indicates there was nothing wrong with what occurred (in Williamsburg), but we are very concerned about the appearance of an FBI agent questioning a newsman about remarks by a department official" said John W. Hushen, a department spokesman.

"We want to see that that doesn't happen again," Hushen added.

getting caught?