

# SOME IN HOUSE SEE A COVER-UP BY I.R.S.

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Panel Chairman Threatens  
Tax Chief With Contempt  
if He Withholds Data

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Members of Congress charged today that an Internal Revenue Service investigation into wrongdoing by the agency's personnel in the Miami area had covered up more than it had disclosed.

Among the matters that the Congressmen complained about was the failure of the agency's published report of its investigation to show how much top officials at Internal Revenue knew about Operation Leprechaun.

This was the informal code name given to a project using undercover informants and that collected information on public officials in the Miami area, including information on their sex lives, and drinking habits.

An angry confrontation over the report between I.R.S. Commissioner Donald C. Alexander and members of a House Government Operations subcommittee produced threats by the subcommittee chairman to pursue contempt proceedings against Mr. Alexander if he continues to refuse to provide information that the subcommittee wants.

## Depositions Sought

Because its members were so unsatisfied with the published results of the I.R.S. investigation, which asserted that Operation Leprechaun was an isolated case, chiefly the work of a single special I.R.S. agent, the subcommittee asked to see depositions and other documents relating to the investigation.

Commissioner Alexander and his chief counsel, Meade Whitaker, said that those documents and others that the subcommittee asked for contained "tax-related" information that the agency was forbidden by law to give to the subcommittee.

One subcommittee member, Representative Andrew Maguire, Democrat of New Jersey, said that the I.R.S. officials were using the phrase "tax related" in the same way that former President Richard M. Nixon "used 'national security'—to cover up anything he wanted covered up."

The subcommittee chairman,

Benjamin S. Rosenthal, Democrat of Queens, said that he would shortly present Mr. Alexander with a subpoena, listing specific documents he wanted, "and you will either honor it or dishonor it."

"If you dishonor it, we will proceed with the appropriate remedy," he said. "We will proceed with contempt proceedings."

## One Complaint Described

Among the specific complaints about the I.R.S. report was one voiced by Representative Robert F. Drinan, Democrat of Massachusetts, who noted that the report on the I.R.S. investigation said that "district, regional and national office officials [of Internal Revenue] were alerted to serious Problems in Operation Leprechaun" as early as September, 1972.

But the report does not say exactly who was alerted, in the national office or elsewhere, Father Drinan said.

Operation Leprechaun continued until early this year and was suspended only after newspaper accounts described the project.

Mr. Alexander, who became commissioner in May, 1973, has said that he knew nothing of Operation Leprechaun until the newspaper reports appeared.

Among the other items in the I.R.S. report on which Mr. Alexander was questioned was the theft of a file cabinet belonging to a Republican candidate for Congress from the Miami area, Evelio S. Estrella.

A man who was acknowledged to be an informant in Operation Leprechaun has admitted to the local police that he took the file cabinet, according to today's testimony. But the I.R.S. officials at the hearing said that they did not yet know whether the burglary had been committed as part of Operation Leprechaun and were still investigating. The burglary took place in November, 1972.

## One Republican Present

Only one Republican member of the subcommittee was present for the hearing. He was Representative Willis D. Gradison of Ohio, who said that he deplored the "atmosphere of confrontation" between the subcommittee and Mr. Alexander but did not make clear whether he was criticizing both sides or just his Democratic colleagues.

An event that helped to create the bad feeling between the subcommittee and the commissioner, all present agreed, was the manner in which the I.R.S. report was made public last night.

I.R.S. officials delivered it to the Joint Committee on Internal Revenue Taxation which, in turn, made it available to the press. The Government Operations subcommittee did not get its copies until this morning. This, I.R.S. officials said, was the result of a mistake.