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New Law Is Dislodging C.I.A.'s Secrets

by Nicholas M. Horrock

Washington, May 13 - Applications under the Freedom of Information Act are slowly beginning to dislodge documents from the Central Intelligence Agency, and tidbits from the agency's secret files are floating all over Washington.

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An amendment to the [Act] that went into effect [19 Feb] has vastly increased the number of documents that are being declassified. Keeping track of the material has become so big a job that Carrollton Press, Inc., which has several other library services, is now offering a service that obtains, catalogues and examines documents released under various aspects of the law.

Both the C.I.A. and the F.B.I have felt the full burden of the new law. An F.B.I. spokesman said that the bureau averaged 113 requests a day in April, and that, although the flow had tapered off somewhat, it still had 101 employes assigned to processing the applications.

The C.I.A. has a 50-man complement processing the requests and received 1,600 since Jan. 1. Each request must be searched through the records, the material read and a decision then made on whether the agency must release the document under the law.

Under the amendment to the act, any citizen may apply to a Government agency to discover whether it has prepared a dossier or file on him. Within a certain range of time or national security, the agency must surrender the file. If it does not, or withholds portions of the file, the citizen may appeal and ultimately get a court hearing.
