

Chavez Curious About Burglaries

Farm union leader Cesar Chavez called here yesterday for the Department of Justice to reveal what it knows about an alleged string of burglaries in the 1960s that unsuccessfully sought links between Chavez and Communists.

The 15 political burglaries were conducted here, in San Jose, Carmel, Delano and Chicago and were financed by growers, the Fresno Bee alleged this week. The Bee based its report on a conversation with an alleged participant in the escapades. It said the FBI was investigating.

Chavez, who has been on nationwide tour for the union's lettuce, grape and Gallo wine boycotts, said his aides in Kern county have been denied any information about the investigation.

"I'm sure they (government investigators) know the name of the (Bee's) informer and who paid the money," Chavez said. He said he was concerned about Watergate-type coverup attempts.

William Gardner, an official in the Justice Department's civil rights section in Washington, D.C., said later that he is familiar with the informers' charges but that investigation is in "premature stages." He said it probably would be referred to local law agencies.

Police here and in Kern county said they have not been contacted by federal investigators about the cases.

The alleged Chavez-related burglaries here were at offices of Ramparts magazine, People's World, American-Russian Institute and the Student Non-violent Coordinating Committee, it was reported.

Those in San Jose were in the offices of attorneys John Thorne and Frederick Hirsch, former assemblyman William Stanton, the San Jose Peace Center, the (Catholic) Social Justice Commission and the East Side Farm Workers' Committee.

The Bee cited two break-ins at the union's headquarters in Delano.

Chavez said yesterday that the union's headquarters at Delano and Keene in Kern County have been burglarized at least 12 times and his own home four times since he started organizing farm workers in 1965. Some stolen materials later turned up in reports of the state legislature's anti-Communist probes, he said.

In a burglary at the Keene office earlier this year, Chavez said, accounting records and the names of workers who received strike benefits last summer were taken.