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Testimony Deleted On Agency Payment To Ex-C.I.A. Man

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WASHINGTON, May 23 (UPI)—The disclosure that a former agent of the Central Intelligence Agency is on the payroll of Action, the Government agency that includes the Peace Corps, was deleted from a Senate Foreign Relations Committee report after a plea by Action's director, Joseph H. Blatchford.

The former agent, Eric H. Biddler Jr., has since been detailed away from Action, however, because such employment would be contrary to the agency's stated policies.

Mr. Biddle, who served with the C.I.A. in Greece, Germany and Washington during the nineteen-fifties, is working in the Office of Economic Opportunity. But he continues to be paid through Action.

Mr. Blatchford's sensitivity to the issue came to light after questions by Senator Claiborne Pell, Democrat of Rhode Island, at a Foreign Relations Committee hearing on Peace Corps authorizations for the 1973 fiscal year.

Mr. Pell, though not present at the April 7 hearing, submitted six questions for Mr. Blatchford.

Included was the question: "Are there any former employees of the C.I.A. or other intelligence agencies now on the payroll of Action, regardless of whether they are now performing duties for Action?"

A week later, Mr. Blatchford sent answers to all six questions to Mr. Pell, with a hand-written postscript:

"I have an understanding with your staff that these questions and answers are for your personal use and will not be put into the record. We appreciate your sensitivity to this issue."

Senator Pell's staff, however, rejected the postscript and demanded a new cover letter without the agreement. This was done.

Nevertheless, when Mr. Pell turned over the questions and answers to the Foreign Relations Committee for publication the two questions involving Mr. Biddler's employment were deleted.

Thomas Hughes, Mr. Pell's press secretary, said yesterday that the Senator had decided to eliminate the material because it could be damaging to the Peace Corps.