

Local FBI

Chief Says Morale Hurt

The Watergate scandal and its spin-offs have dealt a sagging blow to morale in the Federal Bureau of Investigation, according to local agents. Charles W. Bates, special agent in charge of the San Francisco office and a former assistant director of the FBI in charge of criminal investigations, said morale is "at an all time low."

"The lack of stability about where the FBI is going is causing younger agents for the first time to ask questions about whether the Bureau offers them the career they want," said Bates.

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He declared the dissatisfaction among the agents points up the "great necessity" of appointing a professional law enforcement man to head the bureau.

"William Ruckelshaus is a good man but he is only a temporary director, an interim director, and no one knows how long that interim will be," said Bates.

Other agents, who asked not to be identified by name, said the shock waves of Watergate have tarnished the FBI's image.

"The FBI has no business in politics," said one agent.

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"Our credibility is showing now," said another. "How can we get anyone to believe that we will keep information strictly to ourselves when Gray (L. Patrick Gray, resigned temporary Director) has been releasing practically all the information in our supposedly secret files."

The Bureau's annual cost-of-living review for retirement benefits is due to be computed in a few days and many agents predicted that the number of retirements may increase.

From all indications, there will be a jump in benefits that will be equal to credits obtained by two more years of service, and agents who qualify for these extra benefits may take their retirement immediately instead of serving longer in the Bureau, it was asserted.