

Hoover's 'Help' in Elections Reported

New York

Former FBI director Edgar Hoover tried to help re-elect Representative John J. Rooney and other congressional supporters of the bureau by supplying them with sensitive information about their political opponents, according to a well-placed source.

Rooney, a Brooklyn Democrat, head the House appropriations subcommittee that largely controls the FBI's budget. The source said that other recipients of material from Hoover included selected representatives and senators from both parties.

In Washington, a spokesman for the bureau, told of the source's account of the FBI's political intelligence-gathering operation, said, "We categorically deny the story." He had no further comment.

Hoover died in 1972.

Rooney, reached by telephone at his office on Capitol Hill, dismissed the allegations as "a lot of nonsense" and wailed knower workings of the FBI, maintained that the practice of providing "background" data on political challengers was only one of the facets of Hoover's continuing efforts to draw key members of Congress into what the source called "our stable."

In other instances, he said, congressmen had discreetly but systematically been made aware of "derogatory" material about themselves that bureau agents had come across in the course of other investigations.

If correct, the source's charges against Mr. Hoover amount to a gross and illegal misuse of the bureau's investigate authority.

The source recalled on senator who had been told of an investigation concerning his daughter, a college student who had "gotten in-

involved in demonstrations and free love," and a Republican representative who had been told the bureau possessed evidence indicating that h was a homosexual.

"We had him in our pocket after that," the source said of the representative. He added that he could not recall the senator, a liberal Democrat, ever criticizing

the FBI in public.

He characterized the pressure exerted by Hoover in that way on other members of Congress as subtle, but effective.

"We would advise them 'as a matter of courtesy.' Nobody could ever say we were trying to extract our pound of flesh. We were too sophisticated for that. We'd say, 'We've come by this information and we want you to know it's safe in our hands.' We never bent a man's arm. We would never be so crass or so crude."

In addition to Rooney, the source said, some of the chief beneficiaries of politically useful material about their opponents were Rooney's colleagues on the subcommittee.

"We always focused on the Appropriations committee, because we wanted more and more money, he said. "We had the whole thing rigged very time Hoover went up (to testify in be-

half of the Bureau's budget request)."

The Rooney subcommittee invariably approved the bureau's proposed budget with no major reductions. On occasions, it gave Mr. Hoover more money than he asked for.

When Rooney, a conservative, was challenged for the Democratic nomination in 1972 by Allard K. Lowenstein, the source said, the FBI "did everything we could to help Rooney get elected."

"They didn't find anything derogatory on him," he recalled, "but . . . we gave Rooney everything we knew."

According to the source's account, the FBI agents who were ordered to investigate candidates for political office "didn't know why the hell we were requesting the information."

The requests themselves, he said, were made on Hoover's orders "to get this on so-and-so, get that on so-and-so" and were usually passed by telephone rather than in writing.

When the sensitive material reached Washington it was put into files that were marked "Do not file," the source related. "So there were no files on that which we should not have been engaged in, no records at all."

A few days before the November, 1972 election, L. Patrick Gray, Hoover's successor, disclosed that he had just discovered and put an end to a 22-year-old bureau practice of compiling "biographical data" on major congressional candidates.

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