

Charge of Hiring Abuses In Nixon Administration

Washington

A House subcommittee chairman said yesterday investigations indicate that improper political influence in federal hiring was widespread in former President Nixon's administration.

Representative David N. Henderson (Dem-N.C.), chairman of the House Civil Service subcommittee said evidence on some alleged hiring abuses have been turned over to special prosecutor Leon Jaworski.

He added that the abuses

"appear to be tied to" the Federal Personnel Political Manual, described at Senate Watergate hearings last year as outlining a system of using federal agency hiring for political patronage.

Henderson released a report accusing the General Services Administration of improperly, and sometimes illegally, applying pressure on job referrals from congressmen, Mr. Nixon's White House and Mr. Nixon's re-election committee.

The year-old report says

at least 500 cases were handled by a special referral unit in GSA, which the report calls improper. Henderson said the referral unit has been disbanded.

The report, prepared by the Civil Service Commission, said about 95 per cent of the referrals came from congressmen and the rest from the administration and in some cases from GSA officials.

It states that job referrals by congressmen and government officials are not illegal or improper but that pressure to give those people special treatment violates federal regulations.

Henderson said at a news conference that similar investigations have been made and a "somewhat similar pattern" found at the Department of Housing and Urban Development, Department of Health, Education and Welfare, the Office of Economic Opportunity and the Law Enforcement Assistance Administration.

Henderson said his subcommittee has been told that patronage abuses have been eliminated. But Henderson said the subcommittee will continue its investigation to determine if that is true.

He said he is encouraged by a memorandum from President Ford on September 20. The memo instructs heads of all federal agencies to keep the civil service merit system free from partisan politics.

The report on GSA hiring was based on an investigation in GSA's Pennsylvania-Virginia-Maryland region and Henderson said a similar inquiry into the California region found it to be clean of such abuses.

GSA Administrator Arthur Sampson publicly released a letter saying GSA abolished the Special Referral Unit when the abuses were found and acted "swiftly and effectively to correct abuses in the system."

Associated Press