

Coverup of Ex-CIA

Agent's OEO Job

WASHINGTON — (UPI)

— The revelation that an ex-CIA agent is on the payroll of Action, the government agency which includes the Peace Corps, was deleted from a Senate Foreign Relations Committee report after a personal plea by CIA Director Joseph Blatchford, it was learned today.

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

Biddle, who served with the CIA in Greece, Germany and Washington during the 1950s, works in the Office of Economic Opportunity. But he continues to be paid through Action.

Blatchford's sensitivity to the CIA issue came to light following questioning by Sen. Claiborne Pellalign (D-R.I.), during an April 7 Foreign Relations Committee hearing on fiscal 1973 Peace Corps authorizations.

Pell, though not present, submitted six questions for Blatchford to answer.

A week later Blatchford sent written answers to all six questions to Pell, with a hand-written postscript at the bottom of the cover letter:

"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."

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

Nevertheless, when Pell turned over the questions and answers to the Foreign Relations Committee for publication in the report of the hearing, the two questions involving Biddle's employment were deleted.

Thomas Hughes, Pell's press secretary, said yesterday the senator decided to eliminate the material from the public record because it "could very well be very damaging and embarrassing to the Peace Corps."