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F.B.I. May Close Some Small Offices

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WASHINGTON, April 13—The Federal Bureau of Investigation is considering shutting down some of its small offices manned by a few resident agents, according to informed sources.

The two-man office at Media, Pa., was looted of 800 documents March 8.

An organization calling itself the Citizens Commission to Investigate the F.B.I. has said it stole the documents. The release to the press of a small amount of that material has resulted in the disclosure that the bureau has been investigating student, black and peace groups and has sought to recruit informers on and off college campuses.

Small Operations

Informal sources said no decision had been made as to how many offices might be closed. The bureau has 59 major, or field, offices and, under them, some 500 resident agency offices.

The resident agency offices are manned by one to ten agents who are responsible for a given geographic area. Some

of these agents work out of their homes, and some work in rented space as well as in post offices and in Federal buildings.

There are such offices, for example, in Fredericksburg, Va.; Waco, Tex., and Wilmington, Del. The Media office is in the Philadelphia region.

The sources said that "security" was one of the reasons for the current discussion about closing some of the small offices. They also cited economy, efficiency and a continuing review of the need for individual offices. But one source conceded: "One of the motivating factors was that a bureau office was successfully burglarized."

One source sympathetic to the bureau argued that security could not be the only reason.

"What do you do when faced with these kooks, give up and retreat to the caves?" the source said.

The same highly placed source, who refused to be identified, said that he was upset by the news media's treatment of the burglary of the Media office.

"Let's remember," he said,

"that it's a crime, burglary is a crime. It's being treated like an act of faith."

The Citizens Commission to Investigate the F.B.I., in a covering letter attached to some of the documents sent to the press, said of the burglary:

"We have taken this action because we believe that democracy can survive only in an order of justice, of an open society and public trust, (because) we believe that citizens have the right to scrutinize and control their own government and because we believe that the F.B.I. has betrayed its democratic trust and we wish to present evidence for this claim to the judgment of our fellow citizens."

A Justice Department official has said that the documents sent to newspapers and Congressmen were taken out of context to make the bureau's actions and motives look different from what they were.

Spokesmen for the F.B.I. have refused to comment on the burglary, the documents taken, the bureau's investigative practices or the number of agents assigned to catching the thieves.