

F.B.I.'s Chief Organized-Crime Fighter Quits

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WASHINGTON, Aug. 27 — James H. Gale, an assistant director of the Federal Bureau of Investigation and its chief organized-crime fighter, has retired, according to reliable sources.

Neither the F.B.I. nor Mr. Gale would comment. Mr. Gale, 49 years old, is relatively young to retire, particularly in an agency where many of the top people are older.

His retirement comes at a time when some Justice Department officials are complaining privately that J. Edgar Hoover, the bureau's 76-year-old director, has become more inflexible than ever. Mr. Hoover and his agency have recently been the focus of public controversy spurred by criticism in Congress.

Mr. Gale has been with the F.B.I. for more than 30 years.

He took over the special investigative division, which deals with organized crime, in 1964.

Henry E. Petersen, a deputy assistant attorney general in the criminal division of the Justice Department, called Mr. Gale "an able, gung-ho guy" who has been effective in fighting crime.

Mr. Gale notified the bureau of his intention to retire last Monday. He will presumably leave in 30 days. Reliable sources report that his successor will be William V. Cleveland, who has been in the division for several years and is an assistant to Mr. Gale.

A bureau spokesman said today that biographical material on Mr. Gale was "not available." However, its public relations office was recently handing out a printed sheet with such material. According to it, Mr. Gale was born in

Cleveland and attended Western Reserve University and John Marshall Law School.

Began as a Clerk

He began working for the F.B.I. as a clerk in Cleveland in 1939 and was appointed a special agent in 1943. He later served as special agent in charge of offices in Anchorage, Richmond, Cincinnati, Chicago and Washington.

About five weeks ago, Mr. Hoover appointed W. Mark Felt, the 58-year-old head of the internal inspection division, to the No. 3 spot in the agency. Mr. Felt's new title is assistant direction-deputy associate director.

The new job puts Mr. Felt in the F.B.I. leadership between Clyde A. Tolson, the 71-year-old associate director, and two assistants to the director, John P. Mohr and William C. Sullivan.