

Hooverites Contest Gray as FBI Chief

By William J. Eaton

WASHINGTON — (CDN)

— Past and present FBI agents have started an underground campaign to prevent L. Patrick Gray III from being named permanent FBI director.

Gray, the acting director who wants the job permanently, is fighting back.

Since the Senate now must confirm the President's nominee as director, the nomination of Gray would touch off a sharp controversy on Capitol Hill.

Gray's opponents within the Bureau and among its past agents contend, in brief, that he is too politically involved and inexperienced both in management and law enforcement.

Perhaps more central to their opposition, they also contend that Gray has moved too far and too fast to eliminate FBI officials closely associated with J. Edgar Hoover or those who were promoted to high office before Hoover's death last May.

20 Years in Navy

Gray, an Annapolis graduate with a 20-year Navy record, is not about to give up.

His defenders credit him with ending some time-encrusted traditions that barred women from becoming FBI agents and kept black agents to a minimum.

Gray's associates blame "Hooverites" for stirring up dissension and Gray has begun to tell his story directly to Washington newsmen.

Vigorous and husky, the 56 year old Gray also began to make public disciplinary actions against senior FBI officials — a practice that reportedly earned him the nickname of "Tattle tale Gray."

In an action relating to FBI image-building, Gray abolished the crime records division, the FBI equivalent of a public information office and congressional liaison

team. Eight of its veteran agents were shifted to jobs in other cities — without consultation. At least two decided to retire rather than move.

3 Young Aides

Part of the FBI ire against Gray stems from three young people he hired to be his top personal staff — David Kinley, 31, Daniel M. Armstrong, 31, and Barbara Herwig, 28.

"They may be very talented but they are out of their field," said one old FBI hand. "How would you like three inexperienced people

to come in and run your newspaper? It would drive you up the wall!"

Another criticism is that in less than a year Gray has encouraged or allowed about 40 FBI men in key posts to retire. Anyone with 25 years service who is 50 years old may retire at half salary.

"But these men averaged from 25 to 30 years of service and that's a helluva lot of law enforcement experience to go down the drain," one departing agent said.

Friend of Nixon

Gray's past friendship with President Nixon also is

a target. When he retired from the Navy in 1960, Gray went to work in the Nixon campaign for the presidency.

Gray again was with Nixon in 1968 and he was appointed to posts in the Department of Health, Education and Welfare and the Justice Department in the Nixon Administration. The President had nominated him to be deputy attorney general before he was appointed acting FBI chief.

During the Senate hearings into the anti-Trust settlement with International

Telephone and Telegraph Corp., Gray helped Attorney General - designate Richard Kleindienst with his testimony.

Political Intelligence

Last September he directed FBI agents to collect political intelligence for the White House. Time magazine reported he defended his actions within the agency by shrugging and saying: "Wouldn't you do that for the President?"

Many former FBI men who held high posts in the Hoover regime are reported to be directing the largely

anonymous undermining of Gray's regime.

If his name is sent to the Senate for confirmation, they no doubt would contact former friends on Capitol Hill to assure an intensive inquiry before a confirmation vote.