

Early Hearings On Kelley Seen

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Clarence Marion Kelley, the 61-year-old police chief of Kansas City, Mo., is President Nixon's choice to become permanent director of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, sources in the Justice Department and on Capitol Hill said yesterday.

Attorney General Elliot L. Richardson and a White House legislative liaison officer spent much of yesterday introducing Kelley to Senate Democratic and Republican leaders, as well as to members of the Senate Judiciary Committee, which must pass on his nomination.

A White House announcement of Kelley's selection was scheduled for the weekend, but may be advanced, the sources said, because it has become such a poorly kept secret.

Sen. Bob Dole (R-Kan.), apparently under the impression that the announcement had already been made, asked a reporter yesterday, "Have you seen the new director of the FBI yet? He's been up here."

The chairman of the Judiciary Committee, Sen. James O. Eastland (D-Miss.), was expected to schedule hearings on Kelley's nomination for the week beginning June 18.

Kelley, who served 21 years with the FBI before returning to his hometown in 1961 to become its police chief, was apparently picking up bipartisan support even before his formal nomination. The only major opposition expected is from organizations critical of his record on racial issues.

Several Democrats on the Judiciary Committee have indicated, however, that they intend to press any nominee for the directorship for a specific definition of his plans for the FBI, which is suffering from severe morale problems.

His hearings could also be used as a forum for debate on legislation to limit the FBI director's term of office.

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FBI, From A1

If confirmed by the Senate, Kelley would become only the second permanent director in the bureau's history. The late J. Edgar Hoover served in the post for nearly half a century.

Mr. Nixon's original choice to succeed Hoover was L. Patrick Gray III, a Republican loyalist without law enforcement experience who served for 11 months as acting director but failed to win approval by the Judiciary Committee after he became implicated in the Watergate scandal.

Gray resigned as acting director on April 26, after it was disclosed that he had destroyed material taken from the White House safe of Watergate conspirator E. Howard Hunt, Jr., William D. Ruckelshaus, then head of the Environmental Protection Agency, was then named as temporary caretaker of the FBI.

Kelley's age—he will be 62 in October—seemed to guarantee that he would not hold the FBI job for more than eight years. The mandatory federal retirement age is 70, and that requirement is unlikely to be waived for Kelley by a future president as it was for Hoover by President Johnson.

A lawyer with a keen sense of public relations, Kelley took over the Kansas City police force at a time when it was plagued by a scandal in which his predecessor and several other high-ranking officers had been indicted for corruption.

He was selected by the city's police board after a four-month search during which he was recommended by, among others, then Attorney General Robert F. Kennedy.

Kelley is known for his technological accomplishments, including installation of a computer that patrolmen can use to get immediate information from police files.

His supporters, who include much of the city government, claim he has cut crime in Kansas City by nearly 25 per cent since 1969.



CLARENCE M. KELLEY
... Nixon's choice

Last year, Kelley took a brief leave-of-absence to serve as chairman of a five-man board that supervised security arrangements at the Democratic and Republican National Conventions in Miami Beach, and it was apparently at that time that he came to the attention of the Nixon administration.

One of his chief self-acknowledged failures over the years was his inability to recruit blacks to the predominantly white Kansas City police force.

When other methods failed, Kelley last year transferred 10 black officers to full-time recruitment in the black community. There are now 90 blacks among the city's 1,300 policemen.

Black community leaders demanded Kelley's resignation as chief in 1968, when six persons were killed in Kansas City during riots that followed the assassination of the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. They charged that he had condoned the indiscriminate use of tear gas in putting down the riots.

Kelley figured briefly in controversy in late 1969, when it was revealed that he had released 113 confiscated weapons to Maj. Gen. Carl C. Turner, former provost marshal of the Army, who later sold them for profit.

Testifying before the Senate Permanent Investigations Subcommittee, Kelley said he had been misled into believing that the weapons were intended for a military police museum.

(Turner was later sentenced to three years in prison for soliciting firearms from the Chicago police department and keeping them for his own use.)