

Public's Esteem for the F.B.I. Is Found Off Sharply

Public esteem for the Federal Bureau of Investigation, always high in earlier days, has declined considerably in the last decade and particularly since 1970, the Gallup organization reported in its latest poll, issued yesterday.

The polling organization said that the "highly favorable" rating given the F.B.I. in 1965 by 84 percent of those interviewed dropped to 37 percent in the poll conducted last month. Even so, the bureau continued to hold the respect of a majority, with generally positive ratings outstripping negative marks by a ratio of about 5 to 1.

The Gallup survey used a 10-point scale on which it

asked 1,515 adults, 18 and older, in more than 300 communities to rate the F.B.I. from plus-5 to minus-5. The two top ratings, plus-5 and plus-4, were counted as "highly favorable." The poll was taken between Oct. 30 and Nov. 3.

The polling organization said the "highly favorable" rating had slipped 13 points, from 84 percent to 71 percent, between 1965 and 1970. There was another drop of 19 points by 1973 and still another decline of 15 points since then, to reach the current low mark. At the same time, 80 percent of those questioned gave the F.B.I. plus-rating, against 16 percent minus-ratings, with 4 percent stating no opinion.

The Gallup organization said that early disenchantment with the bureau began among younger adults, especially those with a college background, living in the East. But it added that in the latest survey the decline in esteem had become across-the-board, coming after such allegations of misconduct as the harassment of the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. prior to his assassination in 1968. A parallel survey of the pub-

lics regard for the Central Intelligence Agency found that the C.I.A. had scored considerably below the F.B.I. The polling group said that 14 percent of those questioned had given the C.I.A. a "highly favorable" rating, compared with the F.B.I.'s 37 percent. In 1973, the C.I.A. also ranked well behind the bureau but still got "highly favorable" marks from 23 percent of the sample, the Gallup organization said.