

Top Hoover Aides Assail McGovern

Examiner News Services

WASHINGTON — Twenty-one top aides of FBI Director J. Edgar Hoover have assailed Sen. George McGovern (D-S.D.) for criticizing their boss.

McGovern rejected the criticism and said it reflected an FBI tactic of "diverting attention from the critical need for congressional review of the agency."

Letters from the 21 top FBI officials were printed in the Congressional Record today at McGovern's request.

Agent Charges

They were triggered by his March 1 publication of a letter reportedly signed by 10 FBI agents who accused

Hoover of creating a "cult of personality" and neglecting major crimes.

McGovern, a candidate for the 1972 Democratic presidential nomination, has accused the FBI of an "overbearing concern" for its, and Hoover's, public image.

Clyde Tolson, associate director of the FBI and Hoover's long-time personal friend, sharply attacked the senator.

Exceeded Bounds

"I cannot help wondering how many esteemed career public servants will be maligned and abused before your political balloon runs out of hot air," Tolson wrote McGovern.

In reply, McGovern said

Tolson, 70, has been retained well beyond normal retirement age and that his letter "exceeded the bounds of proper comment by high government officials."

The South Dakota senator said the 21 FBI letters came from "the very men who have cooperated in the redirection of Mr. Hoover's administration from the interests of law enforcement to an overbearing concern for the FBI's public image."

In referring to the March 1 letter he said came from the 10 FBI agents critical of Hoover, McGovern said "The letter explained that the administration of the FBI has degenerated into a public relations operation to support the reputation of J. Edgar Hoover."

McGovern has been seeking a Senate inquiry into the resignation under pressure of John Shaw, an FBI agent who wrote a letter including some criticism of Hoover.

No Jobs

Hoover accepted that resignation with prejudice, and McGovern said Shaw has since been unable to find a law enforcement job.

"I term you an opportunist," Tolson wrote, "because it is no small coincidence that you have singled out a man of Mr. Hoover's national stature for attack at a time when waves of publicity are urgently needed to buoy your political career."

"You are not the first person I have encountered during 30 years in Washington whose ambition has far exceeded his ability, and I cannot help wonder how many other esteemed career public servants will be maligned and abused before your political balloon runs out of hot air."