

Secret Service Activity

Dissenter On Vietnam Placed Under Surveillance

The ACLU protested last month against a young man being placed under surveillance by the Federal Secret Service because he wrote an obscene poem attacking President Lyndon Johnson's Vietnam policies. The poem appeared in an off-campus student paper in San Jose last January. Con-

gressman Charles Gubser described the poem in the March 16, 1966 Congressional Record as "a savage attack on President Johnson, in gutter language, built around an allegorical act of sex perversion in Vietnam." The student became fair game for Mr. Gubser since he was hired under the antipoverty work study program as a ward aide at the county hospital. "It is disgusting, and it is shocking," said Mr. Gubser, "that a person who would write such perverted poetry defaming the President of the United States should be allowed to earn taxpayers' money in the war on poverty program." In his speech in the Congress Mr. Gubser declared that the "community action program" cannot succeed "if it becomes a haven for known leftists, beatniks, and writers of obscene and sick poetry and prose that denounces much which is basic to Americanism."

Interviewed on the Job

In consequence of Mr. Gubser's speech, a story about the student was carried in the March 17, 1966 San Jose News under the title, "Hiring of 'Dirty Word' Poet Hit." Then, Robert Andrew, a Secret Service Agent, and another agent visited the student at his job at the hospital. The head of the Psychiatric Division was present during the interview at the student's request.

Long Questioning

The student was questioned as to his feelings toward the President in a 45-minute interview. They wanted to know what kind of a typewriter he owned, whether he owned a gun, whether he had any explosives, etc., and particularly for a list of his friends. When they lost track of him after a time they visited his mother to determine his

whereabouts. Apparently, neighbors and friends have been questioned about him.

The ACLU discussed the matter with Tom H. Hanson, Agent in Charge of the Secret Service in this region, and he stated they had received instructions from their Washington office to keep the student under surveillance and to know where he is at all times. The ACLU will next carry its protests to James J. Rowley, Director of the Secret Service.

Right of Dissent

The right of political dissent is not limited to courteous language and a citizen should not be placed under surveillance at taxpayers' expense and subjected to harassment because he doesn't like what we are doing in Vietnam and says so in very strong and obscene language. Certainly, the life of the President should be protected, but there should be no Secret Service protection against political dissent.