

'Behaviorism' down on the farm NOV-18-1971

CDH

Agnew's talk puzzling

By Diane Monk

Vice President Spiro T. Agnew brought this message to 2,000 Illinois farmers gathered in Chicago: Behavioral psychology poses a dire threat to traditional American values.

Members of Agnew's own staff seemed puzzled that the vice president chose Wednesday's appearance before the Illinois Agricultural Assn. as the time to deliver a blistering attack on the theories of Harvard psychologist B. F. Skinner.

And a discourse on the evils

of behaviorism probably wasn't what the overflow crowd packed into the Grand Ballroom of the Sherman House expected to hear.

HOWEVER, the farmers also were treated to numerous samples of the Agnew wit, and their response to the jokes was enthusiastic.

Gov. Richard B. Ogilvie shared the podium and Agnew congratulated him on "cracking down on those welfare deadbeats."

He then offered the governor a suggestion: "Maybe you should send interior decorators

over to all those deadbeats' apartments — to paper the ceilings with 'help wanted' ads."

Commenting on the recent seating of delegates from Red China in the United Nations, Agnew described the UN as "sort of a China in a bull shop situation."

THESE and assorted other jokes were the prelude to a speech which included not one single mention of the role of agriculture in the American economy. In fact, agriculture wasn't mentioned at all.

Agnew attacked the theories

of Skinner and of Kenneth B. Clark, president of the American Psychological Assn., as threatening to "our belief in the individual and the value of his role in society."

He cited the "more progressive public schools" as a threat to the family as well as to the individual.

"I would think restoration of discipline and order ought to be a first priority—even ahead of curriculum—in the schools of this country," Agnew declared.

THAT STATEMENT drew louder applause than any other uttered by the vice president all evening.

The appearances Wednesday by Agnew and Ogilvie were the political highpoints of the three-day, 57th annual meeting of the Illinois Agricultural Assn. The meeting ends Thursday.