

Jury Hears Five on Agnew

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BALTIMORE, Oct. 3 — A special federal grand jury investigating allegations of political corruption heard testimony here today concerning Vice President Spiro T. Agnew and other elected officials from five witnesses, four of whom had been granted limited immunity from prosecution by a U.S. District Court judge.

The emphasis of today's questioning by a team of federal prosecutors was largely on persons other than the Vice President, including at least one Baltimore County political figure, it was learned from informed sources.

U.S. District Judge Frank A. Kaufman granted limited "use" immunity—giving immunity from prosecution for acts testified to before the grand jury—to the four witnesses. Such immunity still leaves witnesses liable to prosecution if evidence against them is developed without ref-

erence to their grand jury testimony.

William J. Muth, 63, a public relations executive for the Baltimore consulting-engineering firm of Hurst-Rosche, was one of those granted immunity and was the grand jury's lead-off witness today.

Last week he spent a minute before the federal panel and invoked the Fifth Amendment's protection against self-incrimination when the prosecutors asked him about alleged payoffs to public officials, according to informed sources.

Today, Muth said he agreed to tell what he knew to the grand jurors after being granted use immunity.

"They said either answer the questions or you'll be incarcerated for contempt," Muth told a crowd of newsmen after he emerged from an hour-and-a-half of testimony before the panel.

Muth, who was wearing a white stetson hat, a green polka dot-bow tie and a camel-colored sportscoat, said the prosecutors had indicated that

they were interested in possible kickbacks to the Vice President and Baltimore County Executive Dale Anderson, the Democrat elected to succeed Agnew as head of the county bureaucracy.

Anderson was indicted Aug. 23 on 39 counts of extortion, bribery fraud and conspiracy. He has pleaded innocent to the charges and is scheduled for trial Jan. 7.

"They made me answer some questions, none of which implicated anyone," said Muth, a former vice chairman of the Baltimore City Council, and Republican fund raiser. "I said nothing that would implicate Vice President Agnew."

Muth said the federal prosecutors had asked "about 100 questions" covering the years Agnew was governor and Vice President and the time that Anderson has served as county executive. The period spans the years 1966 to the present.

Muth said he turned over to the prosecutors his personal financial records from 1960 to 1972, but said he had not been asked for any records relating to a \$1,000-a-plate fund-raising dinner for Agnew held last fall at the Hunt Valley Inn in Baltimore County.

It was also learned that the grand jury heard testimony from a certified public accountant for another Baltimore con-

sulting firm, Knoerle, Stone, Bender and Associates. The firm was one of the major recipients of contracts for engineering on state road construction in Maryland during Agnew's period as governor.

The witness declined to identify himself as he left the courtroom yesterday shortly before 4 p.m. Asked his name by reporters, he said with a smile "I don't have one."

He was later identified as Charles B. Hart Sr. His lawyer, Ronald Ellison, who accompanied him to the federal courthouse, said, "We will have no comment. No comment at all." It was not known whether Hart was one of those granted limited immunity.

Ellison, a legal tax specialist, gave the grand jury in August a sheaf of tax records. He told reporters at that time that the records "concerned a client of mine."

Yesterday, however Ellison said the tax records he had turned over in August were not related to Hart.

The identity of the three remaining witnesses who testified today could not be learned immediately.

The grand jury met yesterday for 7¼ hours, breaking only for a half-hour lunch. Security precautions at the



Photos by United Press International and Associated Press

Federal Judge Walter E. Hoffman waves as he leaves the court building (left), at right, William J. Muth, a former Democratic Baltimore councilman, pauses before entering the court where he has partial immunity.

U.S. marshals sealed off the six-story courthouse were more intense during the session than ever before. U.S. marshals sealed off the fifth-floor wing of the building where the grand jury meets and an underground garage where some prosecutors and witnesses park their cars. The grand jury sessions, which have been held on a once-a-week basis up to now, are expected to continue to