



ARTHUR F. SAMPSON

... "we have no problems"

Review Set On Kickback In Maryland

By Bill Richards'

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The Consulting Engineers Council of Maryland said yesterday that it will review federal allegations of kickbacks from consultants to politicians in Maryland to determine the accuracy of the reports and decide whether any punitive action should be taken against any firm.

James Otradovec, executive director of the council, which includes 48 Maryland consulting firms, said a specially appointed seven-member committee will seek to find out whether a one-sided picture of possible kickbacks has been given to the public by the federal grand jury investigation in Baltimore.

All seven members of the review committee are consulting engineers and several are connected with firms doing Baltimore County and state work. The committee chairman, Albert B. Gipe, head of the engineering firm of Albert B. Gipes Associates in Towson, declined to comment yesterday.

"Just because some of these people have done state con-

sulting work," said Otradovec, "it doesn't mean they should be suspect. If one of their firms is mentioned in a later indictment I'd assume the committee member would step down."

Otradovec referred to a 40-page Justice Department exposition of alleged kickbacks between consultants and former Vice President Spiro T. Agnew, saying "the charges in it are certainly specific but it is only the prosecutors' side of the case. We don't know whether there's another side but we feel it's only just to give the charged firms an opportunity to speak."

In their exposition, the federal prosecutors referred to specific payments to Agnew by Allen Green and Lester Matz, who both head consulting engineering firms. The document also said Agnew had referred during his governorship in 1967 to "a long-standing 'system' . . . under which engineers made substantial 'cash contributions' in return for state contracts."

The exposition was released by the U.S. attorney's office in Baltimore Oct. 10 after Agnew resigned and the government accepted a no contest plea from Agnew to a tax evasion charge. In it seven firms were referred to—but not named—as having taken part in the kickback scheme for state work.

The federal investigation has also produced a 43-count indictment against Baltimore County Executive Dale Anderson related to payoffs by eight consulting firms.

"Our committee will review press reports of the Anderson indictment and the prosecutors' exposition," Otradovec said. "If any member of our council appears to have performed unethically we'll ask them to come before the committee and give their side of the story."

The committee, he said, will recommend expulsion from the professional society if it determines any impropriety and will file a report with the state registration board for professional engineers. The state board licenses individual engineers and could revoke a license to practice in Maryland, Otradovec said.