

## Grocery Official Turns Over \$6,000

# Agnew 'Gift Food' Is Repaid

By Douglas Watson

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A Food Fair Stores executive who regularly sent gifts of food to former Vice President Spiro T. Agnew has repaid the supermarket chain for the free groceries.

Jack Friedland, Food Fair's president, told a stockholders' meeting Tuesday that Joseph H. Rash, a corporate vice president, repaid the corporation after Food Fair demanded reimbursement. Friedland did not give the amount.

A Baltimore radio station, WFBR, reported yesterday that a "highly reliable" source said the gifts Rash gave Agnew were 273 consecutive weekly deliveries of food valued at more than \$6,000.

Agnew and Rash declined yesterday either to confirm or deny this report of more than five years' free food deliveries to the former Vice President.

At the Philadelphia stockholders' meeting, Friedland declined to say how much food or money was involved except to call it insignificant for the grocery chain, which

had \$2.1 billion in sales last fiscal year.

Rash, director of Food Fair's operations in Maryland and Virginia, was appointed in 1968 by Agnew—then the governor of Maryland—to be chairman of the Greater Baltimore Wholesale Food Market Authority that has been developing a wholesale food center in Jessup, Md.

Rash designed from the authority in 1971.

Friedland said the corporation had not been aware of Rash's grocery gifts to Agnew until newspapers reported about them in September, before Agnew pleaded no contest to a tax evasion charge and resigned as Vice President.

In September, Agnew's office minimized the food gifts, saying only that Rash and Agnew were "very close friends who have exchanged gifts."

Rash said yesterday that his friendship with Agnew goes back "before he held public office," but he declined any further comment on the food gifts.

Friedland had said Rash

used a special Food Fair expense account fund to pay for the food deliveries to Agnew.

"Mr. Rash does a good bit of entertaining in the Baltimore area. This is for public relations purposes. He draws food for this purpose. He drew the food from this fund for the so-called gifts. He did nothing illegal," Friedland said.

Friedland said Rash, a Food Fair employee for more than 35 years, will not be penalized for having arranged the Agnew gifts and remains a "trusted and loyal employee."

Friedland commented on Rash's reimbursement of

the Agnew food deliveries in response to a question from Robert Grayson, a young Milburn, N.J., resident who owns one share of stock in Food Fair Stores Inc.

In September Rash also said that he had given food gifts to Sen. J. Glenn Beall (R-Md.), Sen. Beall said then that the gifts to him were Christmas presents consisting of "fruit cakes and a couple of cans of fish."

The reported 273 free food deliveries to Agnew worth more than \$6,000 amount to an average of \$22 weekly gift throughout Agnew's vice presidential years.