

# Agnew Committee Is Named In Conspiracy Indictment

ANNAPOLIS, Md. (AP)—The Salute to Ted Agnew Night committee that last year sponsored a fund raiser for the vice president was named Wednesday in an indictment charging violations of Maryland election laws. Seven key committee members were named as co-conspirators but were not indicted.

The single four-count indictment grew out of the concealment of a \$49,900 loan which the National Finance Committee to Re-elect the President gave to the Agnew group, which allegedly used the funds to inflate the proceeds of the affair.

Details of the indictment, returned Tuesday by an Anne Arundel County grand jury, were disclosed as President Nixon offered his first personal expression of confidence in Agnew despite the latter's involvement in another investigation of alleged political corruption.

Responding to questions at his San Clemente, Calif., news conference, Nixon said his faith in Agnew's integrity remains unshaken and "in fact ...has been strengthened by his courageous conduct and his abili-

ty."

In Annapolis, State's Attorney Warren B. Duckett Jr. told a news conference that with only the committee indicted, the only potential penalty is a maximum fine of \$4,000. He said that had any individuals been indicted they could have been liable for up to one year in jail and a fine of up to \$1,000 for each count.

"We concluded that the fairest and most justifiable method would be to indict the committee as an entity rather than as individuals," Duckett said.

The seven co-conspirators included some close associates of Agnew and some prominent Maryland Republicans. Twelve other committee members were not named, Duckett said, because they had not taken part in the daily work and decisions of the committee.

Among the seven named was Blagdon H. Wharton, treasurer of the 1972 fund raising affairs, who was indicted by the grand jury on June on two counts of perjury and two of violating state election laws.

The other co-conspirators identified by Duckett were J. Walter Jones, Annapolis banker and close friend of Agnew who

served as chairman of the state committee for the Re-election of the President; Alexander M. Lankler, state Republican chairman and one of the organizers of the Agnew testimonial; John Steffey, a Baltimore real estate developer and treasurer of the Maryland Committee to Re-elect the President; Leonore P. Meyerhoff, chairman of the Agnew committee; Mrs. Charles Bressler, a committee member, and the Rev. Roy Pfauch a political consultant and chief fund raiser for the Agnew night committee.

The "allegations contained in the indictment were best laid to these individuals," Duckett said.

He stressed that Agnew himself was not implicated in the grand jury investigation which was begun after reporters discovered that a \$49,900 contribution from the national Committee to Re-elect the President had been disguised for almost a year as personal contributions from 31 individuals.

"There was no indication the vice president was involved whatsoever except by being the honored guest" at the May 19, 1972 affair held in Baltimore, Duckett said.

Asked if he was going easy on the seven committee members by not indicting them, Duckett replied "I think this was handled in a responsible, judicious and justifiable way."

Maryland's Republican Sens. Charles McC. Mathias and J. Glenn Beall Jr. were listed as honorary chairmen of the Agnew testimonial but were not among those named as co-conspirators.