

State Commission
Waiting at Hotel

O'Brien Has His Day in Maryland

By Richard M. Cohen
Washington Post Staff Writer
ANNAPOLIS, Aug. 24—Gov. Marvin Mandel, taking a direct role in the McGovern campaign for the first time, today summoned some of the states' foremost fund raisers and political brokers for a breakfast meeting with Lawrence C. O'Brien, Sen. George McGovern's national campaign chairman.

The meeting, which O'Brien described as a frank "eyeball-to-eyeball" exchange of views, was arranged at the McGovern forces' suggestion primarily for O'Brien to assure the state's moderate to conservative influential Democrats that McGovern—in the words of one participant—"is not some kind of special devil."

While the meeting was not designed to produce pledges of either support or money—and reportedly produced neither—it did produce some sharp criticism of the way the McGovern campaign has been operating.

Mandel himself went public with his pessimism, telling a press conference following the meeting that "right at the present moment—and this was brought out at the meeting—that right now the state of the campaign in Maryland is that if the election was held tomorrow, the Democrats in Maryland would be in serious trouble."

Mandel would not characterize the trouble as a potential landslide for the Republicans and insisted that McGovern could come from behind to win. Other Maryland Demo-

crats, though, are less optimistic and since McGovern's nomination in July have been conceding the state and its 10 electoral votes to President Nixon.

The breakfast meeting was a prime example of the sort of help the McGovern forces know only Mandel can provide. Present today, for instance, were the three men who raised the money for Mandel's landslide 1970 victory—Irwin Koveas, a millionaire Baltimore political broker; Dale Hess, the former majority leader of the House of Delegates, and Harry Rodgers, an insurance executive.

Besides these three, Mandel set a table for O'Brien that included Willie (Little Willie) Adams, Baltimore's self-confessed but retired numbers rackets czar; George P. Mahoney, the conservative perennial candidate for state offices; Jerrold Hoffberger, owner of National Brewing

Co. and the Baltimore Orioles; Henry Knott, a major contractor and builder; Joe Rash, vice president of Food Fair; Henry and Nathan Weinberg, owners of a transit system in Hawaii; Sam Eig, a Montgomery County motel owner and land speculator, and State Sen. Verda F. Welcome, a Baltimore political boss and black community leader.

In addition, Mandel had Saul Stern, a member of the Montgomery County Central Committee; Felix Putterman, executive director of the Jewish War Veterans; Democratic State Party chairman William S. James; Lt. Gov. Blair Lee III and Secretary of State Fred Millard Tawes. Invited but unable to come were former Gov. J. Millard Tawes, Rep. Parren Mitchell (D-Md.) and former Sen. Joseph D. Tydings.

Missing from the bacon and eggs political rap session were the state's early McGovern supporters, especially the leaders who directed the South Dakotan's Maryland primary campaign. Not even the Maryland McGovern campaign coordinator, Michael Levett, attended the session.

Following the meeting, O'Brien, the former chairman of the Democratic National Committee, reported that he had assured the group that McGovern would stake out clear positions on the issues and clarify his statements. He said the consensus of the group was that "there should not be any waffling on positions."

Although O'Brien did not specify which McGovern positions the group found confusing, a participant said that O'Brien was quizzed about McGovern's welfare reform plan. At one point, Mrs. Welcome reportedly characterized the scheme as unrealistic.

O'Brien, a figure well-known to those at the meeting, reportedly assured them that he knew McGovern well and that he was impressed by him. He said that McGovern would formulate what one participant described as "very responsible positions."

The breakfast meeting was suggested by McGovern's national campaign aides when they met recently with Mandel. Mandel, one of those who initially recommended O'Brien as a vice presidential candidate, asked that McGovern dispatch the former national chairman.