

Agnew: Energy Crisis Tops The Watergate

CLEVELAND — (AP) — Vice President Spiro Agnew says congressmen should be worrying less about Watergate and working more on the energy crisis.

"It might be a good idea for some members of Congress to think a little bit about the amount of the time they're devoting to speculations over what might eventually emerge

from the Watergate investigation," he told a crowd of 1050 at a \$150-a-plate Republican fund-raising dinner last night.

Exclusion

Agnew said the citizens "who are currently worried about the energy shortage and the gasoline problem would like to see those congressmen get to work on some of those matters rather than worrying so much about the Watergate."

Agnew excluded from his criticism lawmakers on the Senate committee investigating the bugging and break-in at Democratic national headquarters in Washington's Watergate complex.

He said the Republican party "is not involved, not indicted and not responsible" for Watergate and he described President Nixon as "reacting absolutely in a top-flight manner under the most severe fire."

'Pressure'

Add normal presidential pressures to "the hearsay and rumor that swirls about him (and) the picking that is being done about minor matters such as security installations at San Clemente (and) you have a man under intense pressure," he said.

He said although some are "hoping against hope to find the corpse of the presidency ... the vultures will be disappointed. The President is alive and well and just as vigorous as ever."

The turnout was about 800 less than the crowd that showed up for an Agnew speech here in 1971. That gathering at \$200 a plate brought in about \$460,000, compared with about \$220,000 this time.