

Hill Inquiry Pushed by Republicans

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Republicans made another effort yesterday to obtain a House hearing for Vice President Agnew on allegations involving him, but are not expected to reverse Speaker Carl Albert's decision to leave it to the court.

Fourteen Republicans on the House Judiciary Committee led by their senior member, Rep. Edward Hutchinson (R-Mich.), introduced a resolution directing the committee to investigate the charges, as Agnew had requested, and to report to the House within three months.

The resolution was referred to the Rules Committee which has received several other similar Republican resolutions. Rules is expected to do whatever Albert asks, either to kill the resolutions or to leave them in limbo.

The argument for taking action to kill the resolutions is that this would prevent Agnew's lawyers from arguing in court that the grand jury investigation of him should be halted because a request for the House to take jurisdiction of his case is still pending. Democratic leaders have made no decision on the question.

Hutchinson told the House: "Through leak and innuendo the character of the Vice President is being maligned. He has asked the House to investigate those charges and we are of the opinion the House has a constitutional duty to accede to his request."

A House investigation "should not be considered as being in lieu of other judicial proceedings," said Hutchinson. He said Agnew's case could be in the courts for "months, if not years," and that the American people are entitled to a "fair and expeditious disposition" of the charges which a three-month House inquiry could provide.

Meanwhile, Agnew gave at least the appearance of business as usual as the federal grand jury in Baltimore began receiving evidence of bribery and kickbacks allegedly involving the Vice President.

Yesterday morning he at-

tended a White House meeting of President Nixon and Republican congressional leaders on the status of trade and defense legislation.

One House member who attended said the Vice President said nothing at the meeting and that no mention was made of his prob-

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lems. He was described as "impassive as usual." The House member said Agnew rarely speaks at these meetings, but usually makes a contribution when he does speak.

Agnew attended a White House state dinner last night for the prime minister of New Zealand, Norman E. Kirk. This morning he plans to fly to Palm Springs, Calif., to be a weekend house guest of his friend, Frank Sinatra. On Saturday, Agnew's office said, he will go ahead with a speech to a group of Republican women.

Agnew had made his request for a House inquiry into the allegations involving him at a meeting with House leaders in Speaker

Carl Albert's office on Tuesday. Although Democratic leaders agreed his request should be turned down because the matter was in the courts, two of them have said they had a feeling of "sympathy" for Agnew in his plight.

One leader who would not be identified said Agnew told them he was being "crucified" by federal prosecutors and "felt he could not get a fair hearing before either a grand or petit (trial) jury."

The Boston Globe quoted one leader as saying Agnew felt the charges against him stemmed from the whim of an overzealous U.S. attorney (George Beall) and that the case was based on "half-truths and fabrications." This source described Agnew as speaking in tones of "weariness and dejection."

Another leader who attended most of the White House meeting yesterday described Agnew as "very calm, strong, always seemed to be in control of himself. He didn't appear to be a man who feels sorry for himself. He didn't shed any tears, but he was not exactly merry."

The sympathy expressed from political opponents was the feeling of politicians who knew or could imagine what it could be like to be the target of a prosecution and bombarded daily

with leaks to the press.

Sen. Barry Goldwater (R-Ariz.) said yesterday:

"I think this man has been framed. Every politician in the country could have this same thing pulled on us."