

# Connally Blooper In Agnew Defense

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## Los Angeles

Former Texas Governor John Connally, usually as glib a speaker as can be found on the political circuit, essayed a ringing defense of Vice President Spiro Agnew here yesterday and hit a clinker.

Addressing the biennial convention of the National Federation of Republican Women, Connally called for the American people to give the beleaguered Agnew the presumption of innocence, then said:

"I hope and pray that the facts are such that he is completely exonerated and that he is indeed found guilty."

There were a few gasps from the delegates at the words "found guilty."

Then at a press conference after his speech, Connally, appearing somewhat chastened, said:

"After my speech I was informed by several people that I had dropped the word 'not' when I meant to say 'not guilty.' I want to apologize to the Vice President."

Connally, former Secretary of the Treasury, has been mentioned as a possible vice presidential replacement for Agnew if Agnew resigns.

## SLIP

Agnew was 100 miles from here, at Frank Sinatra's Palm Springs retreat, apparently unaware of Connally's slip of the tongue.

The vice president is to appear before the convention this morning, however, by which time it can safely be assumed he will have learned of Connally's gaffe.

At the press conference, Connally was asked if he were urging Agnew not to resign.

"I'm not urging him to do

anything," Connally said. "He's had a rough deal. He hasn't had a fair deal."

"As I said in my speech, I think he has not been charged by anyone in any official capacity of anything, has not been indicted, and yet, in the minds of a great many people he's been convicted — of what, they don't know."

## ADDRESS

In his address, Connally said: "Whatever the merits of the case, he is entitled to fair treatment under the judicial system of these United States."

Earlier in the day, Republican National Chairman George Bush took a firm stand against discussing the Agnew case.

"Because I don't know the facts, I am just not going to comment on it," he said.

Bush did say, however, that "recent history — the Republicans winning elections all across the country — shows that the voters are fair. They consider the candidates on their merits, not on such things as Watergate or the Agnew matter."

Those matters, Bush said, have "not caused us organizational problems or caused us to lose elections."

Governor Ronald Reagan, like Connally a potential GOP presidential nominee in 1976, addressed the convention last night.

At the conclusion of his speech the governor asked Federation President Connie Armitage to "express to the Vice President when he ap-

pears here my warmest welcome, and tell him that it is a great pleasure and honor having him here."

Reagan said he would not attend Agnew's speech because he will be campaigning elsewhere for his tax limitation initiative on the November 6 ballot.

He devoted much of his address to an explanation of the initiative, coupling that with a strong defense of the Republican party as opposed to "those misguided" persons involved in the Watergate affair.