

A Matter of Money

By Maxine Cheshire

Former Vice President Spiro T. Agnew, who paid \$25,000 into the federal pension fund during his nearly five years in office, has left it there for four months without asking for a refund.

His delay has prompted Rep. John Moss (D-Calif.) to ask the Civil Service to make inquiries to determine if Agnew still hopes to qualify for a government pension which would pay him \$15,625 a year (at the current scale) when he reaches 62. Agnew will be 56 in November.

When Agnew resigned last Oct. 10, just before pleading no contest to tax evasion charges, he needed only three more months on the federal payroll to qualify for a pension.

Moss wanted to make sure that Agnew was not on the federal payroll in some obscure job after October for the critical three months needed for pension eligibility.

White House press secretary Gerald Warren denied last week that Agnew has worked in any branch of government in any capacity that could count toward a pension since October.

Should Agnew, however, qualify at some point for a pension, his wife, who is 52, would continue to draw all or most of it if she should outlive him. A new bill before Congress would give widows in her category the entire amount.

A Civil Service Commission spokesman told Moss' office last week that the commission had been notified that Agnew's salary as Vice President stopped Oct. 10.

Ordinarily, Moss was informed, the next step would have been for Agnew himself to request that all money paid by him into the pension fund be returned to him as soon as possible. His contributions came to 8 per cent of his \$62,500 annual salary.

"There are only three reasons that we can think of for not asking for a refund," one Civil Service expert said last week. "He doesn't need the money, he hasn't gotten around to it or else he hopes to come back on the federal payroll long enough at some point to still be eligible."

Agnew was covered by the Congressional Retirement System. His five years of military service count in computing the amount he receives, but only after he has qualified with five complete years as a civilian employee.

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