

Pardon for Agnew?**Jack Anderson**

FORMER Vice President Spiro Agnew, convicted of income tax evasion in 1973, has sought a presidential pardon from the man who succeeded him, Gerald Ford.

White House attorneys, perhaps recalling the uproar over their boss's pardon of Richard Nixon, politely but firmly referred Agnew's lawyer to the Justice Department.

Agnew's bid for a pardon came shortly after October 10, when his sentence of three years probation expired. An Agnew attorney called White House counsel Philip Buchen's office.

The conversation "was very low key, very professional," a White House official confided. The brief discussion, we have learned, centered on the "receptivity" of the White House to a formal filing for a pardon by Agnew.

"The reply was that there have been procedures established by Justice," the White House official told us. "The request was no more than any good lawyer would do for his client."

Agnew resigned in disgrace on Oct. 10, 1973 when he pleaded no contest to a single count of tax evasion. The plea, equivalent to a conviction, helped Agnew avoid a messy public trial.

At the time, the Justice Department filed a detailed statement which showed that Agnew began accepting payoffs in 1967 when he was governor of Maryland. The payments continued right up to January, 1973, when a federal grand jury began investigating Agnew.

Footnote: We can find no evidence that Agnew took his plea for a pardon to the Justice Department. His lawyer, Judah Best, declined comment.

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CAUTIONING CARTER — In finding a labor secretary, Jimmy Carter is caught between the two groups who punched through his election, the blacks and Big Labor.

The Congressional Black Caucus, in a strongly worded private letter to Carter, urged him not to appoint former Ford administration Labor Secretary John Dunlop as his own top man at Labor.

But Big Labor cherishes Dunlop for resigning after President Ford wshed on a promise to support a pro-labor bill. Labor leaders, therefore, are strongly backing Dunlop for the job.

The caucus asserted that Dunlop "demonstrated insensitivity" to minority groups by making "no effort" to upgrade the Labor Department's Office of Federal Contract Compliance. The office is supposed to enforce civil rights laws with federal contractors.

To select Dunlop for the Labor Department job, charged the black legislators, would "be a signal that the new administration is not to begin afresh with a new direction."

Footnote: In fairness to Dunlop, he generally received high marks as Secretary of Labor.