AGNEW CRITICIZES SENATE HEARINGS

Says Televised Inquiry Has 'Perry Masonish Impact'

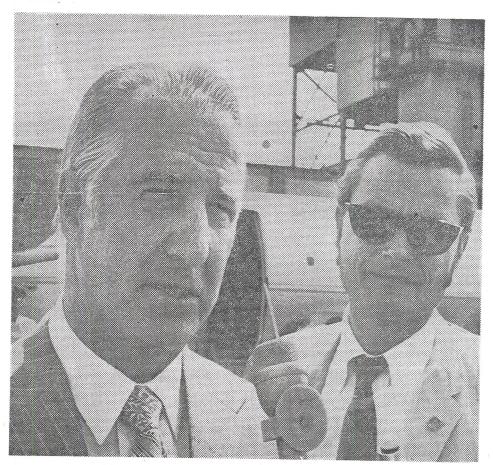
By JAMES M. NAUGHTON

Special to The New York Times

WASHINGTON, June 11— Vice President Agnew declared today that the televised Senate Watergate hearings "can hardly hope to find the truth and can hardly fail to muddy the waters of justice beyond redemption."

The Vice President complained, in a formal address at a meeting of the National Association of Attorneys General in St. Louis, that the televising of the investigative hearings gave them a "Perry Masonish impact" that he said could ruin the reputations of innocent people because of an absence of courtroom safeguards against unsubstantiated testimony. The speech was released by his office here.

Senator Sam J. Ervin Jr., the Continued on Page 34, Column 3



Vice President Agnew as he talked with newsmen at an impromptu news conference yesterday in St. Louis. At the right is a Secret Service agent.

North Carolina Democrat who is chairman of the Senate Select Committee on Presidential Campaign Activities, issued a statement proclaiming the committee's intention to proceed "to ascertain the truth fairly and fully in respect to this from Herbert L. Porter, another history.

ration. And they were made former Secretary of Commerce on the eve of a Federal court and principal fund-raiser for ruling on a Government request Mr. Nixon's 1972 campaign. If to curtail live television and Mr. Magruder is granted imradio coverage of the hearings.

Justice Department prosecutor week. in the Watergate conspiracy The Vice President said in his case, wants a ruling that would speech today that "television's close the hearings, or at least incandescent presence" at the forbid live broadcast or telecast hearings complicated the search of them, when the committee takes testimony from John W. Dean 3d, the former White a spotlighted national stage." House counsel who was dismissed last April, and Jeb from Mr. Cox, Mr. Agnew also

United States District Court here is scheduled to issue a decision of the request to-morrow.

Judge Sirica is also expected to announce tomorrow whether

Continued From Page 1, Col. 2 Senate panel's grant of limited immunity from prosecution to Mr. Dean and Mr. Magruder in return for their testimony about the scope of the conspiracy.

The committee will resume the hearings at 10 A.M. tomortragic episode in our nation's former official of the re-election committee, who appeared be-Mr. Agnew's criticisms of the fore the committee last Thurs-Senate committee procedures day. Mr . Porter's testimony were the sharpest yet by any will be followed by the appearofficial of the Nixon Adminis- ance of Maurice H. Stans, the munity, he is expected to tes-Archibald Cox, the special tify after Mr. Stans, later this

Stuart Magruder, former deputy director of the President's create "a swelling flood of publicity" that he Judge John J. Sirica of the contended would make it "vir-

Objectivity Not Questioned

He emphasized that he did he will formally approve the not seek "to imply that the Ervin committee is proceeding in a haphazard or disorderly fashion" or to question the objectivity of the four Democratic Senators and three Republicans on the panel.

But he complained that the proceedings, by their nature, lacked seven specific "safe-guards" customarily assured in courtroom proceedings.

Mr. Agnew said the Senate hearings did not afford an accused person the "absolute right" to cross-examine other withnesses; that the hearings "severely abridged" the right of a defendant to be represented by counsel, and that the proceedings offere "no firm guarantee" that rebuttal testimony could be presented.

He also protested that there was no way for an accused person to offer evidence that would "impeach the accuser's credibility;" that the committee witnesses were "positively encouraged" to give hearsay testing mony inadmissible in court; that the Senate witnesses were permitted to offer speculative opinions, and that the presence of television cameras was "interjecting" the public in a judicial process as the "ultimate jury" of the Watergate case.

Comment By Baker

The Republican vice chairman of the Watergate committee, Senator Howard H. Baker Jr. of Tennessee, told reporters here that Mr. Agnew was "clearly entitled to make his appraisal" of the committee. Bu the Senator added that the panel had no defendants, was engaged in a search for legis-lative remedies and was determined that it would not "become a tribunal to judge the guilt or innocense of defend-ants."

Senator Ervin, voting that the King James version of the Bible states that "a soft answer turneth away wrath, but grievous words stir up anger, said hat he regreetted Mr. Agnew's criticism.

"Notwithstanding his disapproval," the Senator said, "the committee will continue to perform its duty to ascertain the truth fairly and fully in respect to this tragic episode in our nation's history."