

# Triumph for Agnew At Governors' Meet

By David Barnett

Examiner Washington Bureau

SAN JUAN (Puerto Rico) — Vice-President Spiro T. Agnew, who has had his ups and downs with the nation's governors, managed to arrange to take over all liaison between the statehouses and the White House at a secret session here.

How it all came about at the 63rd National Governors Conference was a matter of some dispute today.

Some governors muttered that the deal was maneuvered by the Vice-President to boost his prestige and to firm up what they think are Agnew's increasingly shaky lines of communication into the President's office.

Supporters of Agnew insist the arrangement was strictly the choice of the governors executive committee.

What came out of the executive committee's session yesterday was a motion requesting that Agnew assume the liaison duties formerly

handled partly by his office and partly by former Gov. Nils A. Boe, director of inter-governmental relations.

A release from the committee said this concentration in Agnew's hands "would be preferable to naming a successor" to Boe, who has been named a federal judge.

Gov. Warren E. Hearnes, Missouri Democrat and conference chairman, said the governors had initiated the meeting with the Vice-President some months ago to discuss liaison problems and Agnew quickly picked it up.

Interviews with some of the seven governors and seven staff men who were present indicate that this is what happened.

#### Assurance

Agnew outlined a system in which he would handle all liaison, and assured the governors that their ideas and complaints in that way would

get through to the executive mansion.

At that point, Montana Gov. Forrest H. Anderson, a Democrat, suggested that Agnew's proposal be put in the form of a motion. Agnew protested that it should be the governors' proposal, not his, before the group.

Another Democrat, Maryland Gov. Marvin Mandel, then reworded the motion and it was adopted.

There have been increasing reports that the vice-president has been pushed further and further outside the White House circle of communication and decision-making.

These have fueled stories that President Nixon might dump his 1968 running mate for the 1972 race, although the President recently has gone out of his way to tell sub-cabinet members to give more public praise to Agnew's work.

#### Reagan

Asked why the Democrats would take the formal steps

in presenting the motion, once Democrat who was there said:

"I happen to think anything we can do to help Agnew stay on the ticket will be helpful to us in 1972."

Agnew also got support on nationwide TV yesterday when California Gov. Reagan on the "Meet the Press" program defended both President Nixon and the Vice-President and said he was for the same team in 1972.

Gov. Hearnes said the governors had been having increasing problems getting their positions into the executive branch and hoped the single channel system would make things better for the remainder of the Republican administration.

Agnew's speech at this conference today reflected a much different moderate tone.

He defended Nixon's new economic policy without any of the rhetorical touches that have so inflamed his critics in the past.

Agnew also stressed that the Administration is maintaining its support for revenue sharing and welfare reform, two issues of particular concern to the governors.

He repeated what Gov. Hearnes had announced yesterday, that the President had invited the executive committee of the governors conference to meet with him at the White House on Sept. 6 to help plan phase two of his wage and price stabilization program.