

# Agnew's Demand Rejected

By William J. Eaton

WASHINGTON — (CDN) — Vice president Spiro T. Agnew, battling corruption charges, now blames unnamed Justice Department officials for trying "to indict me in the press" whether they have evidence or not.

Agnew also jabbed at U.S. Attorney George Beall of Maryland, who is conducting the investigation into government contractors' kickbacks, in a statement read to newsmen yesterday.

## Self-Restraint

Attorney General Elliot L. Richardson rebuffed Agnew's formal demand for an inquiry to see if Justice Department aides were leaking information about the vice

## Inquiry Into Asserted Justice Dept. Leak Refused

president's alleged involvement to the news media.

"We do not now have any firm basis for the assumption that the information which has appeared in the press has come from law enforcement officials," Richardson said in countering Agnew's blast.

The attorney general suggested that the media practice self-restraint.

Refusing to answer questions, Agnew's eight-minute appearance took aim at Beall for balking at a meet-

ing to discuss the allegations.

"If he wants to hear only one side of the story, that is up to him," Agnew said. "I will say only that it seems to me a very strange way to run an investigation."

## Bar on Questions

Two weeks ago, however, Agnew said at a similar session with reporters that "I have no reason to suspect that the prosecutors in Baltimore are antagonistic . . . for me to suspect some kind of nefarious conduct on their part would be, I think, a little paranoid. I don't."

In contrast to his Aug. 8 appearance, Agnew barred questions yesterday and refrained from making a direct, detailed denial of new charges reported Monday by Time magazine.

Quoting anonymous Justice Department officials, the publication said Agnew's indictment next month "appeared inevitable" because three witnesses have said they made cash payoffs to the vice president.

On Aug. 8, Agnew denounced allegations of a \$1000 weekly payoff to him as "damned lies" and added: "I have no expectation of being indicted."

## Confident

Yesterday, however, he did not repeat these lines but said: "I will fight to prove my innocence . . . I have nothing to hide . . . I am confident that the orderly process of justice will result in my complete vindication." The word "orderly" was underlined in his statement.

Agnew gave some support to the Time magazine story by saying that it was now clear that the information came from "persons involved in the investigatory process."

He said it was a "clear and outrageous effort to influence the outcome of possible grand jury deliberations," adding:

"I can only assume from this account that some Justice Department officials have decided to indict me in the press whether or not the evidence supports their position."

Agnew got backing from the Western White House when President Nixon's deputy press secretary, Gerald Warren, said:

"The President feels that leaks in situations such as this are certainly alien to our process of law and the rights of individuals and certainly do not assist in investigating privileged matters." Warren brushed off questions about whether Agnew might be asked to resign.