

Justice Dept. Thinking of Suing Agnew

Washington

The Justice Department is considering suing Spiro T. Agnew to recover the payments he allegedly received from Maryland contractors while he was vice president, a department official said yesterday.

The civil suit, similar to the one brought against former Senate aide Robert G. (Bobby) Baker, could result in Agnew being forced to pay the government about \$30,000 — the amount he allegedly received illegally while vice president.

The government, though has postponed making any decision on the possible suit until the continuing investigation of corruption in Maryland is completed, according to Robert Asbaugh, the Justice Department attorney who is handling the case.

Any civil suit against Agnew would be based on the common law doctrine that if his gains were illgotten they belong to the government — not to himself.

The doctrine was the basis of a suit the government brought against Baker, at-

tempting to collect the money he allegedly took for selling his influence. That suit was settled without the legal issues being decided. Baker paid the government \$40,000 rather than go through a new trial.

Washington Post