

Agnew Denounces Chicago 7's Tactic As Peril to Courts

WASHINGTON, Feb. 26 (UPI) — Vice President Agnew told the nation's Governors today that the defendants in the conspiracy trial of the Chicago Seven were a "handful of oddballs [who] deliberately set out to disrupt the most basic protection of our country, the dignity of the courts."

Mr. Agnew criticized the defendants and other of what he called "social misfits" in a speech at the midwinter meeting of the National Governors Conference. He saved his denunciation of the Chicago Seven until the final minutes of his speech and drew a round of applause when he finished.

It does not matter, he said, whether everyone agrees with all the rulings of Federal District Judge Julius J. Hoffman, who presided at the trial.

"The point is," he said, "that the new technique of judicial disruption is spreading like wildfire through the country. The tactic is to provoke and inflame in the hope that overreaction will obliterate the true nature of the proceeding."

"Courts are becoming carnivals. Laws are flouted. Criminals commit their despicable acts against society in the name of political activity."

Judge Hoffman sentenced all seven defendants and two of their defense attorneys to jail terms for contempt of court. Five of the seven were convicted on charges of crossing state lines to incite a riot at the time of the Democratic National Convention in 1968.

Mr. Agnew told the Governors that the "overriding and compelling issue in the United States today [is]: Will the Government of this country remain in the hands of its elected officials or will it descend to the streets?"

He urged the Governors to demonstrate leadership and "drive these bizarre extremists from their pre-emptive positions on our television screens and on the front pages of our newspapers."