

Mandel's Tough Speech

'Grubby Little Men' and Watergate

Washington

Lamenting that a "few grubby little men have humbled this once proud and mighty nation," the chairman of the National Governors' Conference yesterday blamed the Watergate scandal on non-politicians from the corporate world whom he accused of trying to take control of the country.

"What we are witnessing, piece by piece," said Governor Marvin Mandel of Maryland, a Democrat, "is a massive scheme by a cynical and callous power elite to remake a nation in its own image.

"The arrogant private army of corrupters had its origins in the hyphenated law firms of Wall Street, the advertising agencies of Madison Avenue and Disneyland, and the board rooms of the most powerful industrial giants in America."

Mandel lashed out in uncharacteristically strong terms against leaders in government and private enterprise who participated in "such a pernicious, ugly business."

His remarks were delivered at the commencement exercises of Mount St. Mary's College in Emmitsburg, Md., located just ten miles from the Presidential retreat at Camp David.

"We have witnessed in the past several weeks," he said, "an erosion of confi-



MARVIN MANDEL
Maryland governor

dence in the very institutions of government, those venerable and sacred offices of public trust — the Justice Department, the Federal Bureau of Investigation, the Central Intelligence Agency, the Treasury Department,

the Department of Transportation, the Securities and Exchange Commission, and the presidency itself.

"So far, 15 ranking presidential and governmental officials have resigned and two former cabinet officers have been indicted. And the end apparently is not in sight.

"And I can't help but observe that across this very mountaintop is Camp David — a landmark to the brooding isolation from the realities of America that has led us to this desolation and despair."

Not once did Mandel mention the word "Watergate" in his indictment of the Nixon administration. But he left no doubt about the specific cause of his displeasure.

"The ethic of government for a few terrible months," he declared, "had become the ethic of the board room — of industrial espionage —

of snooping and spying, or bribing and stealing, of pilfering the competition's secrets, of packaging the presidency, of picking its morals off a drive-in movie marquee."

Referring to the convicted Watergate conspirators and to former Attorney General John N. Mitchell and former campaign finance chief Maurice H. Stans, Mandel observed:

"Too often we rush in to punish the corrupted and ignore the corrupters. Would a (James W.) McCord, or a (G. Gordon) Liddy, or a (E. Howard) Hunt exist without the conspirators who conceived such devious schemes? Would a Mitchell have been indicted if there were no (financier Robert) Vesco? And would Stans be walking the plank without the army of favor seekers who fattened his numerous vaults?"

Washington Post Service