

Maryland Judges Pull Out of Probe

Baltimore, Md.

All nine U.S. district judges in Maryland withdrew yesterday from handling any matters pertaining to the special grand jury investigation of alleged kickbacks and political corruption that may involve Vice President Spiro Agnew.

Judge C. Stanley Blair, who swore in the investigating panel in December, quit the case entirely because of his close relationship with Agnew. Blair was secretary of state when Agnew was governor of Maryland, and served as his chief of staff in the first two years of the vice presidency.

Chief Judge Edward S. Northrop, speaking for his court, said an outside judge will "handle all future matters, administrative and legal, arising from the inquiry . . . which in any matter whatever pertain to the vice president.

"We can and will handle all other matters," Northrop said, adding that this arrangement would serve "the best interests of all concerned."

Judge Northrop said he will ask Clement F. Haynsworth Jr., chief judge of the Court of Appeals in Richmond, Va. to assign a new judge immediately. Haynsworth was nominated to the Supreme Court in 1971 by President Nixon but was rejected by the Senate in a bitter confirmation fight.

The vice president has agreed to answer any questions of investigators and told United States Attorney George Beall that he could inspect his personal financial records.

Sources close to the investigation said yesterday that federal attorneys will appear at Agnew's Washington office today to examine those records and to copy any of those they want to study more closely. The vice president will not permit removal of his personal papers.

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