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**Richardson Discloses an Inquiry
On Justice Leaks About Agnew**

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WASHINGTON, Aug. 23—Attorney General Elliot L. Richardson disclosed today that a full-scale internal investigation of the Department of Justice was being conducted to determine if its personnel had leaked information to the press about a Federal investigation involving Vice President Agnew.

Nearly 24 hours after the investigation was ordered by President Nixon, the Attorney General notified Mr. Agnew of the investigation and promised to discipline—and perhaps dismiss—anyone found to have given out such information.

The inquiry, Mr. Richardson said in a letter to the Vice President released late this afternoon, "will use any and all departmental resources . . . [and] I have also asked the director of the F.B.I. to cooperate by making available F.B.I. personnel to assist in the inquiry as needed."

Accusations by Agnew

The highly unusual announcement of an internal investigation of the Federal law-enforcement establishment came after equally unusual public charges by the Vice President.

On Tuesday, Mr. Agnew went on national television to accuse members of the Justice Department of efforts to indict him in the public's mind by leaking information of a Federal investigation. Mr. Agnew is under investigation in connection with a United States Attorney's inquiry into charges of bribery and political kickbacks in Maryland.

The Vice President demanded an investigation, and yesterday President Nixon supported that demand and said that any Federal employe found to have leaked such information would be "summarily dismissed."

In his letter to the Vice President to the news article that touched on the controversy, Mr. Richardson referred off the controversy. Although many stories implicating the Vice President have been published, it was an article in this week's Time magazine that brought into public view the deep distrust that apparently exists among officials of the Nixon Administration.

Sources Were Quoted

Quoting unnamed Justice Department sources, the Time article said that an indictment of the Vice President was virtually inevitable.

That article, Mr. Richardson conceded in his letter, "compounds the problem" for the Justice Department. But he took pains to indicate that the sources could have been outside his department.

"As you know, a considerable number of people, in and out of Government, are aware of some details of the investigation," he reminded the Vice President. "The investigation and its outlines are known to a number of witnesses, individuals under investigation, their lawyers, select members of my, your and the White House staffs and certain investigatory personnel of the Internal Revenue Service. For this reason there may be no fully effective means of stopping the cynical rumors and conjectures all too evident in recent weeks."

Mr. Richardson concluded by further reassuring the Vice President that his offers of cooperation in the investigation were appreciated. Mr. Agnew had earlier complained that the United States Attorney, George Beall, had never responded to an offer by the Vice President to discuss the charges being made against him.