

# Nixon-Agnew Meeting

WASHINGTON — President Nixon met with Vice President Agnew for two hours at the White House yesterday, devoting most of the discussion to a federal investigation into charges that Agnew took kickbacks from contractors while Maryland governor.

Deputy White House Press Secretary Gerald Warren declined to give specifics of the Oval Office session but said two topics definitely were not discussed. He said there was no talk of the Vice President resigning nor was there any conversation about the unresolved constitutional question: Can a Vice President be indicted while in office?

Warren described the Nixon-Agnew meeting as a "good session." He said that "The Vice President brought the President up to date on current matters involving himself."

Other sources said that Agnew "did all the talking." White House aides indicated that Nixon was sitting by and "just going to let the thing unravel."

Nixon would allow no pictures to be taken of him with Agnew.

Aides of both Agnew and Nixon repeatedly tried to play down the significance of the meeting. J. Marsh Thomson, Agnew's press secretary, describing the

session as "a relaxed discussion," said; "it was just the thing to do on a Saturday morning." He said the meeting was Agnew's idea.

It was the first face-to-face meeting Nixon and Agnew have had since a two-hour session on Aug. 7 when word of the federal investigation was first revealed.

The next day, Agnew went on national television to call charges that he took kickbacks to influence the awarding of public contracts while Maryland Governor in 1967 and 1968 "damned lies."

After Agnew left, Nixon met with his top advisers — White House chief of staff Alexander Haig, former Defense Secretary Melvin Laird and presidential counsellor Bryce Harlow — before heading for his mountain hideaway at Camp David, Md., for the rest of the weekend.

Nixon and Agnew previously had talked by phone on Aug. 22, the day the President told a press conference at San Clemente that his confidence in Agnew "had been strengthened by his courageous conduct." Warren insisted yesterday that Nixon still stands by that statement.

Agnew and Nixon reportedly spent part of their time together discussing the Vice President's legal strategy in

the weeks ahead. Thomson conceded the two did talk about "the way it is being handled by him (Agnew) and his lawyers."

Two Agnew attorneys, Jay Topkis and Judah Best, have been spending the last few weeks interviewing current and former Maryland officials in a counter-investigation. They have talked to many of the same persons who have already testified before the federal grand jury in Baltimore and have focused in on just how contracts were awarded under Agnew and his predecessors.

The two attorneys have also been putting together a list of character references in an apparent effort to undermine the credibility of some of the chief accusers of Agnew — particularly Lester Matz, a consulting engineer, who has made some of the payoff allegations.

In his statement of support, Nixon avoided mentioning Agnew's performance as governor of Maryland or county executive of Baltimore County from 1962 through 1966. The federal investigation, which so far has resulted in the indictment of Agnew's successor as county executive, Democrat Dale Anderson, is concentrating on Agnew's career before he was elected vice president five years ago.