

'Celebrities'

Agnew, Connally Rent Discounts

Washington

Vice President Spiro Agnew and former Treasury Secretary John Connally received special "celebrity" discounts on rent they paid for their apartments at the Sheraton-Park Hotel here.

A spokesman for the vice president said Agnew paid the rental fee quoted by the hotel at the time he moved in and was not aware he was getting a special rate.

Connally could not be reached for comment. His personal secretary said she was not aware of any discount given him by the hotel, which is owned by a subsidiary of the International Telephone & Telegraph Corp.

Both the vice president and Connally have been linked to efforts to delay a Justice Department anti-trust suit against ITT.

Paul Robbins, a spokesman for the Sheraton Corp., refused to disclose how much rent Agnew and Connally paid or how extensively discounted it was. A hotel official said, however, that the vice president's five-room luxury suite would rent for about \$100 a month "to the man coming in off the street."

The official, Ted Kissane, said the discount could range from "one-third to 100 per cent" depending on the importance of the person and duration of his stay. He said hotels give discounts to celebrities because of publicity generated by their presence and the belief they attract business. He called

the practice "customary in the hotel industry."

(A check of other luxury hotels in Washington showed that some give discounts and others do not.)

Robbins said other celebrities living at the Sheraton-Park and receiving a discount on their rents include former Supreme Court Chief Justice Earl Warren, hostesses Pearl Mesta, TV personality Lawrence Spivak, and Lawrence O'Brien, former chairman of the Democratic National Committee.

Kissane said the celebrity discounts pre-date ITT's acquisition of the Sheraton Corp. in the spring of 1968.

He said Vice President Lyndon Johnson received a discount when he stayed there briefly in 1961, but would not confirm a report on CBS that the Mr. Johnson paid \$800 a month.

Meanwhile, the New York Times reported that the Agnew family for years had been receiving gifts of food from a supermarket executive, Joseph H. Rash.

Rash, a vice president of Food Fair Stores, Inc., the nation's third largest supermarket chain, is a wealthy Democrat who has close personal political ties to Democratic Governor Marvin Mandel. In 1972, however, Rash's national political contributions — \$2700 — went to the Republican ticket.

Rash was upset yesterday by the report. "Look, we're friends. It's a love affair. He sent me gifts, and I have sent him gifts."

"That's all I can say." He added that he and the Ag-

news have been friends for 12 or 13 years.

A spokesman for the vice president declined to comment on "anything in the realm of gifts exchanged between friends."

Washington Post