

Md. Jury Resumes Bribe Probe

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BALTIMORE, Sept. 13—A special federal grand jury here ended a three-week lay-off and resumed its investigation today under unusually tight security into political corruption in Maryland. A Justice Department spokesman said the probe has not yet entered its "Agnew phase."

Vice President Spiro T. Agnew was notified Aug. 2 that he was being investigated for possible violation of extortion, bribery, conspiracy and tax laws. The grand jury already has indicted Baltimore County Executive Dale Anderson on 39 counts of bribery and extortion.

Since Anderson's indictment Aug. 23, the grand jury has been recessed. During that time, U.S. Attorney Elliot Richardson has been pondering whether to allow evidence that may have been gathered against Agnew by U.S. Attorney George Beall to go before the grand jury.

Beall told reporters last month that if Richardson gives the go-ahead the grand jury probably would enter its "Agnew phase" following Labor Day. A Justice Department spokesman said today, however, that no decision has yet been made by the Attorney General on this question.

"There is no evidence being presented today to the grand jury concerning the Vice President," said the spokesman in Washington. No decision has been reached, he said, on when Richardson will make up his mind and it has not yet been decided whether his decision will immediately be made public.

Today's grand jury action appeared to center around Baltimore County. At least three persons connected with the county government or county politics were seen entering Beall's office on the fourth floor of the old Baltimore post office building.

U.S. marshals sealed off the area near the grand jury room on the building's fifth floor, screening off any view of who might be appearing before the 23-member grand jury. A stairwell linking the two floors also was closed off to reporters and the public.

The tight security precautions—the most rigid during a grand jury proceeding in memory here—were placed in effect, Beall told reporters, to

preserve the secrecy of the grand jury investigation, which he said was guaranteed "by tradition and statute."

Justice Department officials also are privately concerned, sources said, that if Agnew is indicted his lawyers will almost certainly seek a dismissal of the case on the grounds that excessive publicity concerning the probe has been generated by the department. Agnew, himself, has bitterly assailed what he said were Justice Department leaks about the investigation.

At the request of President Nixon last month the FBI has been investigating for possible leaks from within the department. Beall's attorneys on the case have had to sign statements that they have not leaked information to the press. The security precautions surrounding the resumption of the grand jury proceedings are part of a general clamp on publicity instituted by Beall since the FBI investigation began.

The Justice Department spokesman in Washington said in a statement on the increased security: "I'm sure that Mr. Beall is aware of the Attorney General's and the President's concern about leaks in the past and we will do anything we can to stop any future leaks. We don't

want to have a duplication of the weak security around the alternate grand jury."

The three men ushered into Beall's office today were identified by local reporters here as being Robert J. Romadka, chairman of the Baltimore County Democratic Central Committee and a close political associate of Dale Anderson; Walter R. Richardson, director of the county's finance department and James C. Pecunes, a Baltimore County realtor and part time administrative aide to Anderson. It was not known whether they appeared before the grand jury or what the purpose of their visit might be.

But the close association of the three to Anderson appeared to indicate that the grand jury may still be interested in the 56-year-old county executive.

In the indictment, Anderson was charged on 31 counts with extorting a total of \$46,420 from the firms. The legal sources said such extortion charges are often accompanied by additional tax charges to show what was done with the money.

Anderson, who has denied the charges, is scheduled to be arraigned Friday before Federal District Court Judge Joseph H. Young.

The Baltimore County executive

has publicly acknowledged that he accepted cash during his 1966 and 1970 campaigns from builders, developers and contractors who did work for the county, but he has insisted that the money was properly recorded as campaign contributions and was not given in exchange for county work.

William E. Fornoff, Anderson's former county administrator, pleaded guilty in June to a tax charge in return for cooperating with federal prosecutors. Fornoff said at that time that he had turned over cash from county businessmen to an unnamed county official, but he never revealed who the recipient was or why the businessmen gave it.

Fornoff's revelations apparently implicated other engineers who told the investigators enough to expand their probe beyond Baltimore County and into the Maryland statehouse where Agnew served as governor from 1966 to 1968.

Legal sources have speculated that the prosecutors now are seeking to clear away all the Baltimore County indictments in order to have an unimpeded opportunity to press the Agnew investigation should the attorney general give his approval.