

RICHARDSON SAID TO HAVE DECIDED TO LET ALLEGATIONS ABOUT AGNEW BE HEARD BY FEDERAL GRAND JURY

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Move Is Termed Not a Step to Indict Vice President Now

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BALTIMORE, Sept. 14 — Attorney General Elliot L. Richardson has decided to let evidence against Vice President Agnew go to the Federal grand jury that is investigating charges of Maryland political corruption, Government sources in Washington said today.

The purpose of the move to the grand jury, the sources said, is to review the substance of the case assembled thus far by United States Attorney George Beall in Baltimore, and not to seek an indictment now.

No decision has been made by Mr. Richardson on whether the evidence collected thus far would call for an indictment. Nor has he ruled on the constitutional question of whether a Vice President can be charged with a crime or if he must be removed from office first.

The sources stressed that it was not a move to indict the Vice President but rather to look deeper into the evidence gathered thus far.

'Want to Make Sure'

"In a case of this magnitude, they want to make sure that they are not surprised [by unexpected evidence] and that what a witness says under oath before a grand jury is the same as what he says in the prosecutor's office," one source said.

The grand jury could decide on its own to bring an indictment against the Vice President. But before any such indictment could go to court, it would require the signature of Mr. Richardson or Mr. Beall

acting with his approval.

Thus, Mr. Richardson still must face the two key questions on constitutionality and on the weight of the evidence before any legal action is taken against Mr. Agnew.

In Washington, John W. Hushen, the Justice Department spokesman, said there would be "no comment" on the matter. Until today, Mr. Hushen's office had said there was "no decision" on the two key questions. He would not explain the change in response except that he thought "no comment" was "appropriate."

Grand Jury Meeting

In Baltimore, Mr. Beall told reporters this afternoon that there would be "activity" next week and that the grand jury would meet. He would not elaborate.

The 22-member panel, made up of 13 men and nine women, met yesterday for the first time in three weeks. Their meeting was held under unusually tight security precautions, Mr. Beall

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conceded today. In describing the move to the grand jury, one source said "This is no bombs-away decision."

The grand jury has been meeting since January and investigating political corruption in the state.

On Aug. 1, Mr. Beall wrote Judah Best, one of Mr. Agnew's lawyers, notifying him the Vice President was under investigation for possible tax fraud, extortion, bribery and conspiracy.

On Aug. 25, the grand jury indicted W. Dale Anderson, Mr. Agnew's successor as elected Executive of suburban Baltimore County.

Mr. Anderson was arraigned today before Judge Joseph H. Young of the United States District court. He pleaded not guilty to a 39-count indictment that charges extortion, bribery and conspiracy.

Norman P. Ramsey, Mr. Anderson's lawyer, told the court that the plea was "not guilty of each and every count."

Judge Young set the jury trial for Jan. 7. Assistant United States Attorney Ronald S. Liebman told the court the trial would probably last four to six weeks. Mr. Anderson was released on personal recognizance.

Press Is Avoided

Mr. Anderson and Mr. Ramsey avoided the press afterward.

"The only statements I'm going to make will be in the courtroom," Mr. Ramsey said. Earlier Mr. Anderson termed the charges against him "phony" and a "frame-up."

Mr. Agnew has stated repeatedly that he has done nothing wrong and has nothing to hide from his days as the Baltimore County Executive and as Maryland's Governor from 1966 to 1968.

Mr. Agnew has described some of the reports about him as "damnable lies."

The key witness against Mr. Anderson is William E. Fornoff, who resigned June 4, as the county director of administration, a post he held under both Mr. Anderson and Mr. Agnew.

Fornoff pleaded guilty to an income tax charge and agreed to work with the Government

prosecutors. The indictment against Mr. Anderson names him as a conduit for cash payments to the County Executive.

After this morning's action in the courtroom, Mr. Anderson, his wife and a daughter hurried from the old Post Office Building where the courts are situated. They left in a chauffeur-driven county limousine that was then involved in a freak accident just outside the courthouse.

A Freak Accident

Part of the undercarriage of the automobile struck a protruding manhole cover, and the car stopped short, hurling the driver's head into the windshield and tumbling Mr. Anderson and his family.

The frame of the heavy Buick bent at both front door posts from the impact.

The Andersons continued their journey in a taxicab. The driver, Donald P. Cole, was

taken to Mercy Hospital with head injuries.

Mr. Anderson has been working half days at his post since Fornoff resigned in June. He has had recurrent health problems this year. He has said he will not resign.

In a related development today, the Maryland Department of General Services released a 1,500-page compilation of all state contracts handled by the state's Public Works Department for the years from 1962 to 1972.

They were requested by Mr. Agnew from Gov. Marvin Mandel, apparently in preparation of a possible defense for the Vice President.

The records review briefly the spending of hundreds of millions of dollars but do not include spending on state highways before 1971. Prior to that date, such contracts did not need approval by the Public Works Department.