

Talks in Capital Stall Baltimore Jury

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BALTIMORE, Sept. 20—Crucial negotiations in Washington between the Federal prosecutor here and Vice President Agnew's lawyers brought the Federal grand jury investigation of bribery and kickback allegations against Mr. Agnew to a halt today.

United States Attorney George Beall was absent and reported to be in Washington this morning as members of the grand jury convened briefly behind tight security. The security measures, designed to shield the grand jury proceedings from newsmen, were increased today so that reporters could not observe the jurors leaving the Federal Courthouse or note the absence of Mr. Beall.

The prosecutor's deputy, Paul R. Kramer, would not even respond to newsmen's queries as to whether the grand jury had met today, but the brief session—held without hearing witnesses or handing up indictments—was confirmed elsewhere, as was Mr. Beall's presence in Washington for at least the second day this week.

Capital Conferences

It also was confirmed that Martin London and Jay H. Topkis, members of the New York law firm of Paul, Weiss, Rifkin, Wharton and Garrison, had met with Judah Best, Mr. Agnew's Washington lawyer, at a series of conferences in the capital this week.

Whether Mr. Agnew's lawyers have conferred with Mr. Beall or other Justice De-

partment officials, and if so where they met, could not be learned.

A spokesman for the Justice Department in Washington said only that Mr. Beall had "several conferences in recent weeks" with department officials.

"We have a policy of not confirming every time Mr. Beall comes to Washington or one of our people goes to Baltimore," the spokesman said. "Other than that, I can make no comment."

The prosecutor here was given authority last week by Attorney General Elliot L. Richardson to present evidence and testimony to the grand jury concerning Mr. Agnew. Mr. Richardson's decision was to let the grand jury review the prosecutor's case against Mr. Agnew while reserving judgment on the grand jury's right to indict him, if it should find sufficient evidence to do so.

Concurrence Required

No Federal grand jury can hand up an indictment without the signature of the local United States Attorney, and he must have the concurrence of the Attorney General to sign indictments.

The presentation of testimony concerning the Vice President to the grand jurors had not been expected to begin until next week. But further testimony — and possibly, further indictments — in the Government's case against N. Dale Anderson, Mr. Agnew's successor as the County Executive of Baltimore County, who was indicted Aug. 25 on 39 counts of bribery and extortion, had been predicted for today.

Instead, the grand jurors—and their number in the courthouse today may not have met the required quorum of 16 to transact business—convened for about two hours with members

of Mr. Beall's special three-man team of assistant prosecutors assigned to the bribery and kickback investigations. The grand jury made no public decisions or actions.

The grand jury has been meeting once a week every Thursday since it was impaneled last December. Court observers said that the beginning of Rosh ha-Shanah, the Jewish New Year, next Thursday might delay the presentation of testimony concerning Mr. Agnew still another week. If so, this would allow opposing lawyers to hold strategy and bargaining sessions until Oct. 4.

In any event, it was clear that such meetings had been under way this week, and had continued to involve the prosecutor in Washington today, when Mr. Beall's usual practice has been to meet with the grand jury.

Indications that negotiations were under way were also heightened by the fact that the lawsuit that Mr. Agnew's lawyers have said they might file in an attempt to block or delay the grand jury's consideration of testimony concerning the Vice President had not been filed yet.

Impeachment Issue

The lawyers have said that such a suit might be directed against the Attorney General in an effort to bar the presentation of evidence to the grand jury until the Supreme Court has ruled on assertions, should Mr. Agnew choose to make them, that a sitting Vice President cannot be indicted in the courts without first being impeached.

The grand jury here appears to have some work still before it, even if the Agnew testimony is delayed.