

# Mandel, state said to end furniture flap

By David Michael Ettlin

Former Governor Marvin Mandel would pay the state \$10,000, and in return the state would give him some property he left in the governor's mansion under a settlement reportedly worked out to end a longstanding legal wrangle.

Attorney General Stephen H. Sachs had filed a civil suit three years ago claiming that Mr. Mandel and his wife moved out of the mansion with thousands of dollars worth of state-owned household goods and furniture shortly after his 1977 conviction on federal corruption charges.

The Mandels, complaining about vindictiveness by the Hughes administration, filed suit against the state charging that thousands of dollars of their own furniture had been kept by the government after they left Government House — the official name of the mansion.

"The settlement is imminent but not final," T. Joseph Touhey, an Anne Arundel county lawyer representing the Mandels, said last night. "What we're waiting for is the state truck to arrive."

The truck, Mr. Touhey said, will be delivering to the Mandel home "a lot of pieces of furniture that heretofore

the state said they didn't have, and now they're coming back."

"The Mandels are getting back what they sued for. Nothing is going back to the state," Mr. Touhey added.

He declined comment, however, on a report by the Associated Press that Mr. Mandel would pay the state \$10,000 as his part of the negotiated settlement.

Charles O. Monk, an assistant attorney general who has handled the case for the state, was asked about the \$10,000 and told the Associated Press, "Your source has very good information."

Mr. Sachs last night acknowledged there have been discussions about a settlement but declined to say how near a conclusion might be, or whether Mr. Mandel would be agreeing to the \$10,000 payment.

The state's civil suit against Mr. Mandel was filed in January, 1980, by Mr. Sachs after lengthy negotiations failed to produce an agreement on whether the former governor had taken anything belonging to the state when he left office and his official government residence.

The suit sought to reclaim 57 pieces of furniture and other items said to be worth more than \$20,000,

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and for Mr. Mandel to pay \$3,811 "for food, liquor and supplies the Mandels removed when they left Government House."

The objects ranged from a brass bed to Waterford champagne glasses and redwood chaise lounges.

The suit also charged that Jeanne Mandel, the former governor's wife, had the mansion staff — over the objection of the house manager — order huge amounts of food and supplies in the 16 days before the couple moved and had them pack it for shipment to their private residence.

Those items included 350 bottles of liquor, \$489 worth of dog food, \$201 in toiletries and 43 cases of cleaning supplies.

The day before the state suit was filed, Mr. Mandel took his own suit to Anne Arundel County Circuit Court asking that he be declared the owner of 38 of the 57 disputed items, and claimed to know nothing of the other 19. But he asked the court to order the return of 18 items he had left behind in the mansion.

Last night, Mr. Touhey said the items left at the mansion included a marble bust of Mr. Mandel.

"One can only speculate where it's been reposing in the State House or the governor's mansion," the lawyer said.

Mr. Touhey claimed the state had spent far more pushing its case against the Mandels — \$100,000, by the lawyer's estimate — than the furniture was worth, and "fought it down to the last suffering taxpayer."

"I can't believe what was spent to bring the case to this point," he added. "They sued for liquor and dog food — it's all preposterous at this point."