

Ford Vows to Reveal Finances and Taxes

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House Republican leader Gerald R. Ford, named by President Nixon to be Vice President of the United States, pledged yesterday to make full disclosure of all his financial holdings and tax returns to the congressional committees handling the nomination.

Ford said the President, in choosing him, hadn't asked him anything about his finances—only about his health. "He assumed that if

I had anything in my background" it would have come out by now, Ford said.

The vice presidential nominee also said, "I have no intention of being a candidate for any political office, President, Vice President, anything, in 1976." However, he declined to go one step further and state that he wouldn't change his mind under any conditions whatever.

The Michigan Republican made his remarks to a group of reporters in the

House press gallery a few moments before walking onto the House floor—where he has been a popular member for 25 years—to the stormy applause of his colleagues.

Republicans and Democrats alike crowded round Ford to shake his hand and pat him on the back during a brief pro forma session to receive the nomination officially and refer it to the Judiciary Committee, amid

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widespread predictions that it will sail quickly through both chambers.

The House chaplain, in an invocation that appeared to refer to the resignation of Vice President Agnew for financial misconduct, called upon the deity to place men in high office "whom the spoils of office cannot buy," and then concluded with a hearty, "God Bless Jerry Ford. Amen!"

A few moments after, Ford left for a White House meeting with the President and Secretary of State Henry A. Kissinger, where he received his first intelligence briefing. It was primarily on the Middle East.

The President told reporters that Ford would immediately begin attending all Cabinet and National Security Council meetings and receive daily intelligence briefings. He also will be assigned an office in the Executive Office Building. After his meeting with the President, Ford left for a visit to

his home state. He will return in time for a White House church service today.

Meanwhile, the Senate Rules Committee and the House Judiciary Committee laid plans for hearings on the nomination.

House Judiciary Chairman Peter W. Rodino Jr. (D-N.J.) said that hearings would be held by the full 38-member committee and probably could begin within two weeks, with live television coverage permitted.

Referring to the personal popularity of Ford and the expectations of quick confirmation, Rodino cautioned, "the fact that Rep. Ford is a member of Congress will accord him no particular advantage or privilege in the confirmation process."

In the Senate, the nine-member Rules Committee held a brief meeting and Chairman Howard Cannon (D-Nev.) announced afterward that he believed the committee could wind up its action on the nomination "in a month's time."

He said the committee,

like the House group, also would allow live television coverage "on a pooled basis."

Cannon and Rules Committee senior Republican Marlow W. Cook of Kentucky revealed they have requested a "full-blown FBI investigation" of Ford, which they said would take two weeks. "We've asked them to expedite it if they can," Cook said. He said letters had been sent to the American Bar Association, the Michigan bar, the General Accounting Office and the Library of Congress requesting information about Ford and various other matters connected with the nomination.

Encomiums on Ford and pledges of support continued to pour in yesterday, with Senate Majority Leader Mike Mansfield (D-Mont.), who served with Ford in the House many years ago, calling him an excellent choice—I will vote for him."

Because it was Agnew's financial dealings that forced

his resignation—only the second Vice President ever to resign—both the House and Senate committees are expected to focus heavily on Ford's financial situation and sources of income.

Recognizing this, Ford readily discussed his finances with reporters yesterday.

After asserting he intended to stay in the House until he is confirmed as Vice President, Ford said he would make available to the Senate Rules and House Judiciary committees a full list of his assets and "I certainly intend to make my income tax returns available to the committees."

Asked if he has an outside law practice, he said, "no." He said he has three homes—one here, one in Grand Rapids and a condominium in Vail, Colo., which his family uses for vacations.

Ford said his stock holdings consist of \$9,000 in debentures of the Ford Paint and Varnish Co. "which I bought in part and inherited in part from my father," al-

though the family-owned company has since been sold. "That is the only stock I have personally," he said, although he said his wife had inherited some.

Ford said outside business interests consist of holding a directorship in a label manufacturing firm in Grand Rapids, Rosepatch, Inc., for which he received about \$1,800 a year in directorship fees at the rate of \$300 for each meeting of the board. He said he'd been on the board "seven to eight years" but will leave it.

He also said an \$11,500 campaign contribution he had received in 1970 hadn't been reported because he didn't use it for his own campaign but merely turned it over to the House GOP campaign committee for distribution to other members.

On an issue that could cause him considerable trouble, especially in the Senate, and slow down the confirmation express, he avoided a direct answer. Asked whether he believes Presi-

dent Nixon should obey the courts if they ultimately rule he must give up the White House tapes, Ford said, "Politically, I thought the President ought to give up the tapes. But there are some very serious and very genuine court issues—it's now in the hands of the courts."

In the Senate Democratic caucus, senators who had been pressing to enlarge the Rules Committee and add a top-flight investigative senator in the expectation it might be needed if John B. Connally of Texas were the nominee, gave up their fight yesterday. They let the nomination go directly to the Rules Committee without expansion.

But, according to several present, Sen. Russell B. Long (D-La.) urged that the Senate go very slow on Ford and conduct a most rigorous probe.

"We've got a perfectly qualified man (Democratic House Speaker Carl Albert of Oklahoma) in the line of

succession if anything happens in the meanwhile," Long was reported to have told colleagues. He reportedly said that it would be preferable to have Albert in the job instead of Ford if, on account of a Watergate tapes clash between the President and the courts, Mr. Nixon should have to leave office.

So far, however, only one Congressman has come out flatly against Ford—Rep. Michael Harrington (D-Mass.).

Ford's nomination, if confirmed, will leave vacancies in the post of House GOP leader and in the Fifth Congressional District of Michigan. Reps. John J. Rhodes (R-Ariz.), a conservative, and John B. Anderson (R-Ill.), a moderate, are among the leading possibilities as next House GOP leader. Michigan officials said a special election will be held to fill the Fifth District vacancy. News services reported that state Rep. Jelt Sietsema announced his candidacy.