

Gibson Nomination To FEA in Trouble

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President Ford's choice of Andrew E. Gibson to be head of the Federal Energy Administration ran into trouble yesterday when it was disclosed that Gibson received a million-dollar separation settlement from an oil and barge firm.

White House press secretary Ron Nessen said that a full investigation would be conducted on Gibson but that as far as he knew the President still supported Gibson.

The usual investigation was not conducted before the President nominated Gibson to succeed John C. Sawhill last month because of the "urgency" of the appointment and because Gibson had undergone investigations in the past for other federal posts, Nessen said.

Gibson is a former maritime administrator and assistant secretary of commerce in the Nixon administration.

News reports have said that Gibson, who resigned the presidency of Interstate Oil Transport Co. of Philadelphia, had a severance contract that will pay him \$100,000 annually for 10 years.

Nessen at first said that Mr. Ford "will send the nomination of Mr. Gibson to the Senate" when Congress reconvenes.

Later, Nessen said that before the nomination is submitted the usual investigation will be made.

Still later, deputy press secretary John W. Hushen said that Sawhill "will continue to run the agency" until a successor is confirmed.

Should Sawhill leave before Gibson is confirmed, Hushen said, the President would appoint an interim administrator to run the FEA.

One high White House source, when told that Hushen's comment sounded as though the President was backing away from his support of Gibson, declared, "There is no backing down."

At the Interior Department, William Rhatican, a spokesman for Secretary Rogers C. B. Morton, said Gibson had not been Morton's recommendation for the FEA job but that he had concurred in it.

PRESIDENT, From A1

Rhatican added that Morton as of yesterday had made no recommendation in regard to

Gibson's future in light of the disclosures about his income from his former oil company.

Gibson himself, according to one of his associates, reacted

angrily when informed of the White House comments about not investigating his background before announcing his appointment to the FEA. The information about his income from Interstate Oil Transport Co. was among the records Gibson supplied to the White House, according to this associate.

An aide to Gibson said that, contrary to news reports, Gibson's contract called for \$88,000 a year for 10 years — not \$10,000 a year — and that the White House knew of the arrangement before it announced his selection as head of the FEA.

Adrian Hooper, Interstate board chairman, confirmed that Interstate had a severance contract with Gibson but declined to discuss its terms.

"The individual has to make up his own mind if there is a conflict," Hooper said.

Gibson left Interstate in May after he had been president of the oil and barge company for only 16 months. In recent days he has been going to meetings at the FEA even though he is not officially on the job.