

Senate Rules Panel Jurisdiction Blocked

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A group of Democratic senators blocked a move yesterday to send the vice presidential nomination to the Senate Rules Committee unless the committee is enlarged to include a top-notch investigative senator to assure the most careful digging into the nominee's record.

In a debate that lasted over three hours, Sens. Lawton Chiles (D-Fla.), Alan Cranston (D-Calif.), Edward M. Kennedy (D-Mass.), Joe Biden (D-Del.) and a handful of others prevented a vote that would have let the nine-member Rules Committee automatically handle the nomination and hold hearings on it.

"We're talking about how we're going to elect the next President of the United States — this isn't the Secretary of State, this isn't the

director of the Office of Management and Budget," said Chiles, demanding that the nine-member Rules Committee be enlarged to give it broader representation during the hearings on the nominee.

Chiles and others stressed they haven't any complaint with Rules Chairman Howard Cannon (D-Nev.) but want a broader spectrum, including a proven investigative senator.

"There has never been a single instance in the history of this country when the Rules Committee considered a nomination," said Kennedy, who preferred the creation of a broad select committee drawn from all corners of the Senate. He said the Senate needs "the fullest opportunity for the

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fullest examination" of the nominee.

Earlier yesterday, the caucus of all 43 Republican senators voted unanimously to let the Rules Committee handle the nomination, reasoning that Senate rules give the Rules Committee jurisdiction over matters of presidential succession.

In the Democratic caucus, however, Chiles, Kennedy, Birch Bayh (D-Ind.), Cranston and others pressed for a larger forum.

However, Democratic Whip Robert C. Byrd (D-W. Va.), Cannon and others said the regular rules should be followed and the nomination given to the Rules Committee.

Sen. Ernest F. Hollings (D-S.C.) and Cranston eventually offered a compromise proposal, which the caucus approved 24 to 20, enlarging the Rules Committee by three Democrats (one of whom was to be Majority

Leader Mike Mansfield of Montana) and three Republicans. They said this would allow appointment of wider representation and a really experienced investigative senator, Birch Bayh (D-Ind.). Bayh wrote the 25th Amendment on presidential disability and nomination of a Vice President, and has a proven record in investigative work on the Judiciary Committee on the Nixon nominations of G. Harold Carswell and Clement F. Haynsworth to the Supreme Court.

Mansfield, as well as Cannon and Byrd, voted against this proposal. However, Mansfield took it to the floor late yesterday as spokesman for the 57-member Democratic caucus and asked for a vote.

Republicans made clear they would vote against the Democratic enlargement resolution, and it became obvious that their votes, coupled with those of Democrats who had voted in caucus in favor of giving the nomination to the Rules Committee without enlargement, would be enough to kill the Hollings-Cranston proposal.

In that case, the nomination would automatically be referred to the Rules Committee for action without any enlargement of the committee.

Chiles, Cranston and the others, hoping to round up more votes overnight for the Cranston-Hollings enlargement plan, refused to grant the unanimous consent needed for a vote last night. "We didn't have the votes to defeat the GOP tabling motion" that would kill the Hollings-Cranston proposal, Chiles explained later. "We want wider representation than the nine on the committee."

Mansfield, meanwhile, together with GOP Leader Hugh Scott (R-Pa.) and many others, pleaded with the Senate to vote on the issue last night, before the President sent up the name of the nominee, lest the squabble over procedure

look like a political battle over the man named.

Mansfield also told the Senate that he saw no reason why committee examination of the nominee couldn't be completed "by the end of this month."

Cannon said that, assuming the committee procedure is worked out in today's Senate session, he will call the Rules Committee together before noon to start laying the groundwork for hearings on the nomination. Mansfield also reported that House leaders had turned down the idea of joint House-Senate hearings.

In the House, it has already been decided that the Judiciary Committee, a big committee with broadly representative membership, will handle the nomination.

Cannon told reporters that he will let senators who aren't on his committee sit in and ask questions, that he will ask the FBI immediately for a full investigation of the candidate, and that the committee would decide whether to allow live TV coverage. However, he seemed negative about the TV idea, saying, "We do not want to make the hearings into an extravaganza."

Aside from Chairman Claiborne Pell (D-R.I.), Byrd, James B. Allen (D-Ala.), Harrison A. Williams (R-Ky.), Scott, GOP Whip (D-N.J.), Marlow W. Cook (R-Ky.), Scott, GOP Whip Robert P. Griffin (R-Mich.) and Mark Hatfield (R-Ore.)