

Ford Candor Impresses Foes; More Hearings Planned

By Richard L. Lyons
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"Mr. Ford, I'm not going to vote for you, but I'm terribly impressed by your honesty and candor."
That was Rep. Jerome Waldie

(D-Calif.) speaking at the end of two days of testimony by Gerald R. Ford at the House Judiciary Committee hearings on Ford's confirmation as Vice President. Waldie is one of several Democrats on the committee who believe that the issue of President Nixon's impeachment should be settled before Ford is confirmed. Democratic liberals on the committee don't seem to have found anything wrong with Ford, the House minority leader, except his voting during 25 years in the House. They consider it too conservative. He said it should not be an issue.

Ford has been denounced by civil rights groups, who will testify Monday, for voting to gut civil rights bills by amendment and then voting for the bills on final passage to make his record look good. Ford insisted his civil rights record was good. He recalled that he had voted to abolish poll taxes as requirements for voting in 1949 before civil rights legislation "was fashionable."

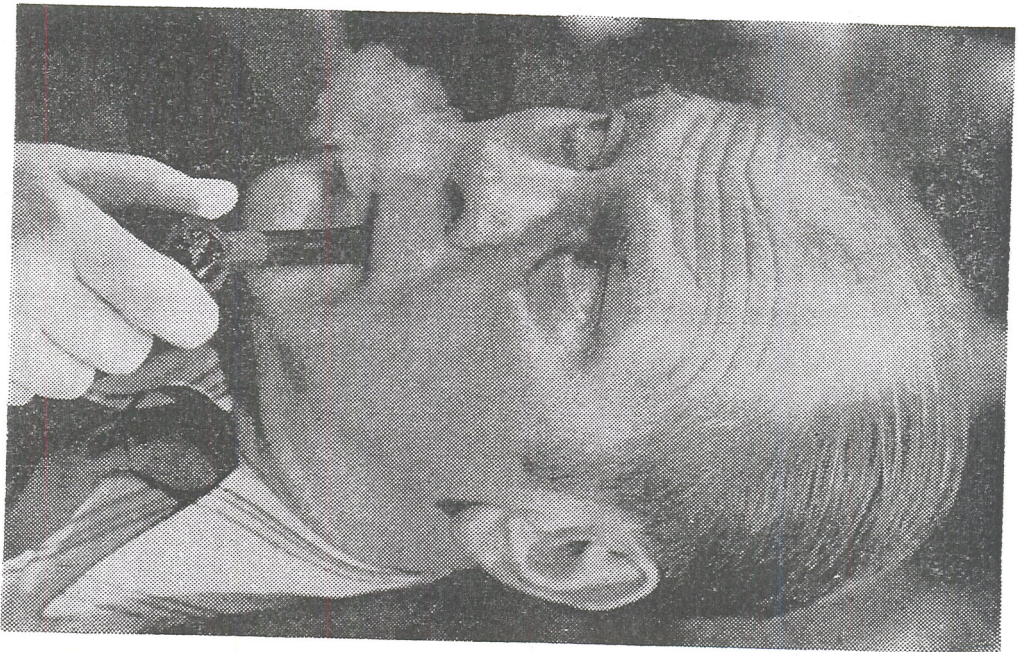
Ford stated his civil rights beliefs this way: "I believe every American regardless of race, creed or color must be treated equally. I have lived that. If I hold a position of responsibility, I will insist that every person have equal opportunity in employment, housing, education and the like."

Ford offered a letter from the black mayor of his home city of Grand Rapids, Mich., saying Ford would make a "great Vice President."

Ford, who opened his testimony Thursday with the statement that "people should tell the truth," yesterday modified his statement that sometimes government may be forced not to tell the truth. He said he would prefer that government "withhold" information in national security situations rather than "blurt" the facts.

Asked what vote he regretted casting over 25 years, Ford replied that he had cast 4,192 roll call votes and couldn't think of one he would change. Nor could he think of anything else he would have done differently. He said he had never attacked political opponents and stated that all of the opponents in his 13 House races "are my friends."

Ford will return for further questioning at some later date.



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PENSIVE NOMINEE—Gerald R. Ford puffs on his pipe as he testifies at the second day of hearings by the House Judiciary Committee on his nomination as Vice President. He said he would not do a "rubber stamp" job.