

Ford Says Nixon ^{SPost} Made Slight Gain ⁶⁻¹¹⁻⁷⁴

WASHINGTON (AP) — Vice President Gerald R. Ford says President Nixon scored a very slight gain in his impeachment battle as the ITT and milk price evidence "sort of fell flat" last week before the House Judiciary Committee.

Ford, in an interview following his weekend trip to Utah, also renewed his offer to act as a bridge between the panel and the President. But he conceded he has no specific ideas which could head off a deadlock.

Neither the President nor the committee has indicated willingness to conciliate and Ford said he sees nothing to conciliate at the moment. Nixon rejected another of the panel's subpoenas for Watergate tapes Monday.

Ford had said earlier he agrees with the President that the House committee should examine witnesses and other evidence at hand before demand-

ing any more tapes from Nixon. But then, he had said, Nixon should turn over the requested tapes "the sooner the better."

Despite what he termed "a very slight gain" for Nixon because of the unimpressive impact of the antitrust and milk price matters, Ford stuck to his prediction that the President would survive impeachment by about a 4 to 3 margin in the full House. That would work out to a 63-vote edge if all Congressmen were counted.

The Vice President said he personally sees no evidence of impeachable wrongdoing in any of the issues before the committee, including the controversial March 21, 1973, Watergate discussion.

Several members of the House Judiciary Committee have interpreted those words as an order by the President to pay hush money to Hunt.