

CBS Turns Down Ford Interview

New York

CBS News has turned down an opportunity to televise an exclusive interview with President Ford because the date proposed by the White House would have preceded the November elections too closely.

Ron Nessen, the President's press secretary then scheduled Mr. Ford for "The Reasoner Report" on ABC-TV, in which the President is to conduct a tour of Camp David, Md., for the cameras, accompanied by commentator Harty Reasoner.

The ABC program is to be filmed this weekend and tentatively is to be broadcast on November 2, three days before the elections.

CBS news said it had sought the interview ever since Mr. Ford took office and had not been offered a date for it until last week.

William Sheehan, president of ABC News, said his network had requested a presidential tour of Camp David during the Nixon administration and that it was finally granted "a week or ten days ago."

The proximity to the elections had not been a consideration because "the program would be nonpolitical and harmless, more a tour of Camp David than a visit with Ford."

Sheehan added: "There is no agreement with the White House as to the date we would put it on the air. After shooting it, we'll determine whether the program is politically benign. If we feel it is politically sensitive at election time, we'll either balance it or not put it on until after the elections."

New York Times