

Ford says his past is clean, pledges disclosure



—AP Photo

Smiling Gerald Ford, vice president designate, shows off his red flannel vest yesterday at an annual parade in Cedar Springs, Mich.

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Pledging full financial disclosure, Rep. Gerald R. Ford said yesterday there is nothing in his background that should prevent his expected confirmation as the nation's vice president.

There was virtually unanimous praise announced for President Nixon's nominee, but members of the House Judiciary and Senate Rules committees made it clear they will scrutinize Ford carefully.

An Associated Press survey showed there were more than enough favorable votes in Congress to confirm the House Republican leader as vice president.

Meanwhile, Nixon said that even before Congress acts on the nomination, Ford will receive daily intelligence briefings and participate in meetings of the National Security Council and Cabinet. Nixon said Ford will also get an office in the Executive Office Building.

Sen. Howard Cannon, (D-Nev.), said it should be about two weeks before his Rules panel can start public

hearings on Ford. It will await receipt of a full FBI check on the 60-year-old Michigan congressman.

In the House, Rep. Peter W. Rodino Jr. (D-N.J.), said his Judiciary Committee would begin public hearings within two weeks with full television coverage permitted.

Ford, smiling and relaxed,

—Turn to Page 11, Col. 4

—From Page 1

paid a visit to the House Press Gallery. For about 30 minutes, he answered questions about his finances and political plans.

Although President Nixon announced his formal intelligence briefings would start immediately, Ford said he plans to hold onto his House seat until Congress completes the confirmation procedure under the 25th Amendment.

He repeated "as emphatically as I can" that "I have no intention of being a candidate for any political office in 1976," including the presidency.

Ford was asked if there was anything in his background that might come up in confirmation hearings and replied "not to my knowledge." He said "I certainly intend to make a full disclosure" and will make his income tax returns available to the two committees.

But Ford said President Nixon hadn't asked anything about his finances before choosing him to replace Spiro T. Agnew who resigned Wednesday. Agnew pleaded no contest to one count of income tax evasion in the wake of charges he had taken kickbacks. He was fined \$10,000.

The only question the President asked, the Michigan congressman said, was about his health. "It's pretty obvious," the trim former football star said. "I'm in good health."

Then we went to the House floor, where his colleagues gave him a standing ova-

tion. The House and Senate both formally received his nomination yesterday.

Ford, who is now House Republican leader, said in response to a question about his vice presidential duties: "I think the President wants me to spend a lot of time here," meaning on Capitol Hill.

He said he has given no thought to foreign travels. Agnew made a half-dozen foreign trips, including an 11-nation Asian trip in 1970 and a month-long round-the-world jaunt in 1971.

To questions about his finances, Ford made these points:

- He owns about \$9000 worth of debentures in a paint company founded by his late father and now merged into a Detroit firm. His wife has a few inherited stocks.

- He plans to resign from the board of directors of Rosepatch Inc., a label manufacturing firm in Grand Rapids, which paid \$1800 a year for attendance at six meetings.

- He has no law practice and owns three pieces of real estate, his homes in Washington's Virginia suburbs, and Grand Rapids and a condominium in Vail, Colo., where he goes skiing at Christmas.

- None of the \$11,500 in campaign contributions he failed to report in 1970 "went into my pocket." The funds weren't reported because he turned the money over to the Republican Congressional Committee, he said. Ford added it was "purely coincidental" that a similar amount was later pumped by the committee into his own district.

The Washington Star-News reported yesterday that \$38,216 for Ford's last House campaign came "from a secret fund-raising setup which concealed the names of the donors. The newspaper noted that donations, however, were legal at that time.

Sen. Cannon said his com-

mittee won't depend entirely on the FBI for its information about Ford. He declined to comment on whether it

will seek the congressman's reports on campaign contributions and spending.

He repeated that all senators will be welcome to attend the hearing and ask questions.

The procedural snarl that had threatened the start of Senate consideration disappeared after Ford became the nominee.

A resolution passed by the Democrats 24 to 20 Friday adding six members to the Rules panel for the confirmation proceeding was revoked yesterday.

In the House, Rodino said Ford wouldn't have any special advantage in the confirmation proceedings because of his status as a longtime House member and the Republican leader for more than eight years.