

Air-Minded Senator

Howard Walter Cannon

By RICHARD L. MADDEN

Special to The New York Times

WASHINGTON, Oct. 31— Three years ago former Vice President Spiro T. Agnew prevailed on a Nevada District Attorney to become the Republican candidate to try to replace Senator Howard Walter Cannon, the Democratic incumbent.

**Man
in the
News**

Starting tomorrow, Senator Cannon will preside over Senate hearings on the man who has been nominated to replace Mr. Agnew, Representative Gerald R. Ford of Michigan.

It will be a rare thrust into national prominence for the 51-year-old Mr. Cannon, who has spent most of his 15 years in the Senate concentrating on his prime interest—aviation—for the relatively unknown Senate Committee on Rules and Administration, which he has headed since the beginning of this year.

It will also be the first under the 25th Amendment to the Constitution that Congress has had to deal with the confirmation of a Vice President. The stocky, leathery-faced Nevada Democrat has taken in the assignment in what his friends say is his customary deliberate style.

In addition to holding frequent meetings of his nine-member committee to discuss procedures for the hearings Mr. Cannon has been pouring over some 1,400 pages of information on Mr. Ford's background gathered by the Federal Bureau of Investigation.

'Could Be Joe Doaks'

"Nobody knows precisely what ought to be done," Mr. Cannon said in an interview. "There are no precedents on this. We are very anxious to make sure we don't leave something undone simply because we knew Jerry Ford as a member of Congress. In the future it could well be Joe Doaks of Timbuktu, and we wouldn't want to set a precedent that Congress considers his to be not too important."

Mr. Cannon, who spent nine years as the Las Vegas City Attorney before his first election to the Senate in 1958, is described by some of his Senate colleagues as being an able prosecutor, who pursues a subject thoroughly.

"I don't envision myself as being solely a prosecutor," Mr. Cannon said. His role in the hearings he said, would be "to insure that we make a thorough investigation and

report the nomination to the Senate."

He was born Jan. 26, 1912, in St. George, Utah where his father, an Englishman, operated a cattle ranch. He was graduated from Dixie Junior College in St. George and from Arizona State Teachers College and received his law degree from the University of Arizona.

He won letters in track, baseball, basketball and football and was described as a "top-notch college wrestler." He played the clarinet and saxophone and organized a dance band to help pay his way through college.

Mr. Cannon learned to fly while in college, and during World War II was the pilot of a C-47 transport plane that was shot down over the Netherlands after a drop of paratroopers in 1944. He and one of his fellow officers, Frank X. Krebs, who is now the Senator's legislative assistant for military matters, spent 42 days behind German lines before American troops liberated the area.

A painting on the Senator's wall shows Mr. Cannon and Mr. Krebs, dressed as Dutch farmers, walking down a road. A partially eaten apple is at their feet. Mr. Krebs explained that they had eaten apples as a prearranged signal of recognition for two members of the Dutch underground who met them and led them to a safe hiding place in a silo.

Mr. Cannon is a retired Air Force Reserve major general but still flies aircraft, including supersonic military jets, when he has a chance to do so. His interest in aviation and his seniority have led him to chairmanships of the tactical air power subcommittee of the Senate Armed Services Committee and the aviation subcommittee of the Senate Commerce Committee.

He likes planes and believes strongly in air power and in general tends to give the military what they want," said one fellow Democrat.

Mr. Cannon upset former Senator George Malone, a conservative Republican, in the 1958 election. He won reelection by 84 votes in 1964 over Gov. Paul Laxalt. He did better in 1970, winning by about 24,000 votes over William Raggio, the Washoe County (Reno) District Attorney, who had the backing of the Nixon Administration including Mr. Agnew.



The New York Times

Wants to be certain of a thorough investigation.