



AP Wirephoto

Vice President Gerald Ford (right) talked to newsmen in Phoenix yesterday about the indictments

Ford on the Indictments

Phoenix

Vice President Gerald R. Ford said yesterday that despite the new Watergate indictments, he still believes the national economy will dictate the outcome of the 1974 elections.

Here to address a Republican fund raising dinner,

Ford read a prepared statement to reporters who questioned him about indictments returned against seven of President Nixon's former top aides.

"I got word that the grand jury had rendered some indictments, but we must keep in mind that under our system of justice, an accused

person is presumed innocent until convicted," he said.

The vice president refused to comment any further on the indictments on grounds he might prejudice the case.

But he said the economy was far more to blame than Watergate for loss of his home district in Michigan to

the first Democrat to win the seat since 1910.

"Having won 13 elections from that district, I believe the closure of three General Motors plants had more effect than the Watergate issue, although Democrats exploited both skillfully," Ford said.

Associated Press