

Rocky Denied a Prompt Hearing

Washington

Senate Rules Committee Democrats rejected yesterday Nelson A. Rockefeller's plea for a chance to testify immediately about issues raised over his nomination to be vice president.

Rockefeller issued a terse statement afterward saying: "I regret that I won't have a proper forum for at least another month.

Chairman Howard A. Cannon (Dem-Nev.) announced that the committee would not reopen its hearings until November 13 at the earliest and possibly not until November 18, the date Congress returns from an election recess.

Rockefeller has asked for an opportunity to present all the facts about nearly \$2

million in gifts he has made to political associates and friends, and about a 1970 campaign book about former Supreme Court Justice Arthur J. Goldberg.

But Cannon said the committee's investigation of these matters has not been completed and that a report on the audit of Rockefeller's income and gift tax returns will not be available before October 22.

"I do not believe it would be advisable to convene the committee for further testimony at this time until all of the aforementioned information is available, he said.

"Additionally, he said, "several members of the rules committee would be unable to attend such a

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meeting at this time.

He said the decision to defer reopening the hearings until after the November elections represented "the consensus of a majority of the committee."

Asked if any of the committee's Republican members were included in that consensus, he replied: "No."

However, Cannon said he would have "no opposition to Rockefeller making a complete statement to the press on the matters involved" before hearings reopen.

He said he so advised Rockefeller by telephone shortly before making his announcement. He said Rockefeller didn't indicate whether he would issue such a statement but told him he would prefer a public hearing."

Earlier in New York,

Rockefeller said he was "getting a little indignant" about the delays in Congress in acting on his nomination.

He complained that his nomination is being tried in the press on the basis of selected leaks from the income and gift returns he had submitted to Congress in confidence.

Rockefeller said that although his nomination was submitted two months ago, he has spent only 2½ days before the Senate committee and the House Judiciary Committee has not even started its hearings.

For the last two weeks, he said, his nomination has been in the nation's headlines because of information leaked to the press about his gifts and about the Goldberg book.

Goldberg was Rockefeller's Democratic opponent for governor of New York in

1970 and has protested that the book, financed by Rockefeller's brother Laurence, was scurrilous.

Cannon said no decision has been made on whether to call recipients of Rockefeller's gifts, including Secretary of State Henry A. Kissinger, as witnesses.

As for Goldberg, he said that "if he still desires to appear, he ought to be given the opportunity."

Democratic leader Mike Mansfield disclosed earlier in the day that Goldberg had telephoned him last Thursday and requested that he be allowed to testify.

Cannon said he didn't think the reopened hearings should last more than two or three days and said he thought the Senate should be able to vote on Rockefeller's nomination before the end of November or the first week in December.

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