

# New Delay on Election Funds

## Washington

President Ford refused to put the Federal Election Commission back in business yesterday, even though the Senate confirmed five of his six appointees.

The President said he will not officially reconstitute the commission — and thus release \$2.2 million in federal matching funds to the financially strapped presidential candidates — until his sixth nominee is confirmed.

The Senate Rules Committee, which has jurisdiction over the nominations, is due to hold hear-

ings Friday on the sixth person, former Republican Representative William Springer of Illinois.

Committee Chairman Howard Cannon (Dem-Nev.) said he had other commitments and could not schedule the meeting until that day.

This means that the commission might not be back in business until the day before the next primary day when five states — Arkansas, Idaho, Kentucky, Nevada and Oregon — will vote.

Of the leading candidates eligible for matching funds, only the

campaigns of two, Mr. Ford's and that of Senator Frank Church (Dem-Idaho), are in the black.

The commission's authority to certify the payment of federal subsidies ended March 22, after the Supreme Court ruled in January that its makeup was unconstitutional.

Since March, millions of dollars in requests for matching fund payments from the Treasury have piled up, including new submissions Monday for \$1,493,051 more.

The total requested by all  
*Back Page Col. 4*

## From Page 1

candidates now is \$5,259,645, and \$2.2 million of that has been verified by audit and is ready to be released.

"Whether they have a dollar in hand today or tomorrow doesn't make any difference," White House counsel Philip Buchen said yesterday in explaining the President's decision.

Buchen said the President "felt that, inasmuch as he'd sent up the six names as a group, which would give a commission that would be balanced and equally divided between the two parties, it's up to the Senate to move quickly and give up the sixth name."

The five approved by the Senate yesterday were renominations of original commissioners. Springer is to replace Thomas B. Curtis, who asked not to be renamed.

The President revealed his decision not to swear in the five after they were confirmed by voice vote in the Senate, where some members expressed fear that the commission might not be able to function with five members.

The commission's general counsel has felt that it can function with as few as four of the six.

Mr. Ford, in an interview in his office yesterday with a television station from Little Rock, Ark., said that "I had hoped the Senate would ... confirm the six members so we could have a fully operative Federal Election Commission.

He added that he thought "the proper way" would be to wait until the sixth is confirmed.

The five approved yesterday were confirmed a year ago by the Senate. Springer went before the Commerce Committee in 1973 for a position on the Federal Power Commission. The Senate confirmed his nomination then, 65 to 12.

Congress finished work on the law reconstituting the election commission May 4, but President Ford did not announce that he would sign the bill until a week later. Then he waited another six days to nominate the members. The Senate confirmed the original five within 24 hours.

*Washington Post*