

The Senate Confirms Ford, 92-3

Washington

Gerald R. Ford was confirmed by the Senate yesterday to become the 40th vice president of the U.S. The vote was 92 to 3.

The nomination is expected to win House Judiciary Committee approval tomorrow and final House approval December 6.

The Senate vote marked a historic moment for the nation — the first time that either house of Congress had acted in place of the voters in passing on a vice presidential nominee under the 25th Amendment to the Constitution, which provides for filling any vacancy in the position.

Yet the debate and the vote that followed it were quietly undramatic, perhaps reflecting the personality of the nominee, an earnest, candid, hard-working man from Michigan who frankly acknowledges that he lacks the charisma of some political figures.

The three opposing votes were cast by Senators Thomas F. Eagleton of Missouri, William D. Hathaway of Maine and Gaylord Nelson of Wisconsin, all Democrats.

Ford, the 60-year-old Republican leader of the House, did not witness the debate or the vote. He awaited the outcome in the office of the Senate Republican leader, Hugh Scott of

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Pennsylvania, just down the hallway from the Senate chamber.

It was there that he got the news from a fellow Republican, Senator Marlow Cook of Kentucky, who walked in and, with a broad grin, handed him a slip of paper that read simply "92 to 3."

A short time later, Ford received a telephone call from his old friend, President Nixon, who had chosen him as vice president 46 days ago, just two days after the abrupt resignation of Spiro T. Agnew.

"The President told me that was a great vote and he wished me well on the House side," Ford said later. "He said he hoped the House vote would be as good as the Senate."

Ford said that he told the President that the concluding Senate speech on his behalf had been made by Senator Humbert H. Humphrey, (Dem-Minn.), who was vice president under the late President Johnson.

"I told the President that one can't get more bipartisan support than that," Ford added.

"I'm eager and anxious to get in and do a new job, he said, "but at the same time I can't help but have regrets over leaving the House and all the wonderful men and women I served with after these 25 years."

Yet, he added, "my whole physical and mental attitude right now is the sooner the better."

While Ford did not witness the debate or vote, his wife watched intently from a front-row gallery seat. She was accompanied by Mrs. George Aiken, wife of the Republican Senator from Vermont.

The thought that the Senate might be confirming not just a vice president but the next president of the United States was expressed by most of the few Senators who spoke.

"We are, after all, selecting a potential president," Nelson said, in opposing the Ford nomination. "I don't believe that he can provide the kind of leadership that this Nation desperately needs."

Senator Edward Brooke (Rep-Mass.) also observed that the nominee "must be qualified to assume the high-

est office at any moment." Brooke, who is one of the few Republicans who has asked Mr. Nixon to resign, said that "Jerry Ford is a man who gives me hope."

Absent for the Ford vote were Senators George McGovern (Dem-S.D.), Stuart Symington (Dem-Mo.), Edward Gurney (Rep-Fla.), Paul Fannin (Rep-Ariz.) and James McClure (Rep-Idaho).

Earlier in the day, Ford addressed the biennial convention of the Seafarers International Union of North America.

While conceding that there had been "some conflict" and "some serious disagreements" between Congress and the President, Ford said he hoped to offer his 25 years of congressional experience as an "input" to work out answers that are good for America.

Referring to the President as a "very fine skipper with a good record," the vice presidential nominee said that "despite some choppy water and rough seas we've been going through," the maritime workers could be "proud of what can be done by your government."

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