



AP Wirephoto

Gerald Ford was sworn in as vice president by Chief Justice Warren Burger as Mrs. Ford held Bible. Watching were House Speaker Albert (upper left), Senate President Pro Temp Eastland and President Nixon.

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Ford's First Duty

Washington

Only minutes after taking office, Gerald R. Ford presided over the Senate for the first time and was given "a last reprieve" from the silence imposed on vice presidents.

Ford, standing up, gaveled the Senate to order at 3:34 p.m. PST.

Within minutes of his swearing in, the former House Republican leader went directly from the House to the Senate to assume the only duties the Constitution prescribes for him — to preside over the Senate.

Majority leader Mike Mansfield welcomed Ford by telling the Senate "he is

now in, if not of the Senate. . . he is not beholden either to this body or to the president."

But Mansfield reminded Ford that the presiding officer of the Senate is not the same as the presiding officer of the House, who is the Speaker.

The latter's gavel, Mansfield said, is a sledge, Ford's "A piece of soft ivory."

Mansfield said there is no person "with less influence and more at the mercy of the members" than the vice president and added that Ford "is expected to be seen, not heard."

He added that only in rare cases, when the Senate is evenly divided, "can he speak and then only in mon-

osyllables of yes and no."

Then Mansfield asked Ford if it was in order for the Senate to let the new vice president speak — but not for more than five minutes.

Senate GOP leader Hugh Scott then asked unanimous consent that Ford be allowed to speak.

Using less than his allotted five minutes and speaking from a prepared text, Ford said, "Love of America and faith in the goodness of this great country of ours is the power which unites all of us, those who govern and those by whose consent we govern, as we pray for better tomorrows in a peaceful world."

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