

Head of Panel Ford Will Face

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William Leonard Hungate OCT 17 1974

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WASHINGTON, Oct. 16—Mark Twain's old home town, Hannibal, Mo., is in Representative William L. Hungate's Congressional district. Portraits of Samuel L.

Man in his office.
in the The Representative
News quotes pas-
sages from Twain
novels from

memory. And, in his public and private manner, Mr. Hungate reflects some of the whimsy and mischief of Tom Sawyer and Huck Finn.

His ready wit, already familiar to his friends, colleagues and constituents, was on national display last summer during the televised impeachment proceedings of the House Judiciary Committee. There was criticism from those who thought his irreverence during the otherwise sober proceedings was in poor taste, but generally Mr. Hungate played to favorable reviews.

Based on this past performance, it would not be surprising if Mr. Hungate added a touch of humor to President Ford's historic appearance tomorrow before his Subcommittee on Criminal Laws.

On the second night of impeachment hearings, Mr. Hungate addressed the argument of some Republicans that the impeachment articles needed to be more specific. "If they don't know what we're talking about," he declared, "they wouldn't know a hawk from a handsaw, anyhow."

On the question of whether "inferences" could be drawn from mass of circumstantial evidence against Richard M. Nixon, Mr. Hungate remarked, "I tell you, if a guy brought an elephant through that door and one of us said, 'That is an elephant,' some of the doubters would say, 'You know, that is an inference. That could be a mouse with a glandular condition.'"

The Missouri Democrat became a bit testy when

some Republicans on the Judiciary Committee asserted that perhaps Lyndon B. Johnson and Harry S. Truman had committed some of the same offenses that were being attributed to Mr. Nixon. "I think it is awfully hard to give due process to a dead man," he said.

But then, as is his style, Mr. Hungate leaned back in his chair, smiled, and said he would "resist" similar attacks on Dwight D. Eisenhower because "we were in the Army together."

Moved to Missouri

William Leonard Hungate was born in Illinois on Dec. 14, 1922. His parents moved to Bowling Green, Md., when he was a small child and he attended public schools in Bowling Green and the University of Missouri.

As a youth he played the clarinet and saxophone in an assortment of bands and combos and developed a lifelong interest in music. Had he possessed more talent, he says, he would have majored in music in college and become a professional musician. But, as it was, he studied politics and history.

He graduated from Harvard Law School in 1948, and he and his wife, the former Dorothy Wilson, whom he had met in the Bowling Green High School band and married in 1944, went home to Missouri, where Mr. Hungate began a career as a small-town lawyer and prosecutor.

The Hungates have two children, David, who is now 26 years old, and Kay, 23. David plays the guitar and bass professionally, living the life of an entertainer to which his father once aspired.

Mr. Hungate became active in Democratic politics after he returned to Missouri, and was elected to Congress in 1964.

For a time, his reputation as a wag overshadowed his reputation as a legislator. But, of the early nineteen-seventies, he had begun to

make a name for himself as a hard worker with a mind finely attuned to the law.

He was widely praised within the legal circles last year after his Subcommittee on Criminal Laws developed a uniform set of rules of evidence for the Federal courts.

And he was the chief sponsor of the second article of impeachment adopted by the Judiciary Committee, charging Mr. Nixon with abusing the powers of the presidency.

But Mr. Hungate did not let his responsibilities restrict his sense of humor. Along with collecting beer cans, his chief hobby is composing politically satirical tunes.

Last year, at the height of the Senate Watergate committee hearings, callers who dialed a telephone number paid for by the Democratic National Committee could hear Bill Hungate, accompanying himself on the piano, sing a ditty he had written and recorded called "down at the Old Watergate."

"Come, come, come and play spy with me, down at the old Watergate," the lyrics, set to the tune of an old English pub song, began.

Mr. Hungate's re-election next month in his heavily Democratic district seems assured. His Republican opponent, a St. Louis county councilman, Milton J. Bischoff, criticized Mr. Hungate for his humor at the impeachment hearings.

But it was at the impeachment hearings, on national television, that Mr. Hungate expressed his own philosophy about humor.

"I would apologize to some if they have found occasional attempts at humor offensive," he told his colleagues and the television audience. "But I have never thought a sense of humor needed to destroy your sense of responsibility, and in my case I felt it better to have a sense of humor than no sense at all."