



By James K. W. Atherton—The Washington Post

At Senate Rules Committee meeting on Rockefeller nomination, Chairman Howard W. Cannon confers with

Sen. Robert P. Griffin. Sen. Robert C. Byrd is at center. Cannon said confirmation hearings will start Sept. 23.

Rockefeller Must Disclose All Assets

By Spencer Rich

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The Senate Rules Committee voted unanimously yesterday to require vice presidential nominee Nelson A. Rockefeller to make a full disclosure of his financial assets to the public.

But Chairman Howard W. Cannon (D-Nev.) said he doesn't expect the committee to force the multimillionaire to divest himself of any of his assets or put them in a blind trust as a way of avoiding possible conflicts of interest.

Cannon said the committee agreed to start confirmation hearings on Sept. 23, with the nominee as the initial witness. He said it seemed likely that

Rockefeller would make his financial statement public at the Sept. 23 hearing.

The Rules Committee vote yesterday involved public disclosure only of Rockefeller's assets and liabilities, not of his tax returns. Cannon said no declaration was made on publication of the returns, which have already been given to the committee along with a statement of the nominee's net worth.

Committee member Robert C. Byrd (D-W. Va.) said it appeared to be the unanimous feeling of the committee that compelling divestiture wouldn't serve a useful purpose.

"What should be required is full, complete disclosure of his

assets," Byrd said. He said the conflict-of-interest statutes apply only to appointed officials but not to persons running for national office, and if Rockefeller had been nominated by his party to run in a national campaign he wouldn't have to divest.

Cannon told reporters "the Rockefeller holdings are so vast and extensive that divestiture would not be in order," since "it could have adverse effect on the stock market." As for a blind trust, Cannon said, there's no way such a device can really insulate a man from knowledge of his holdings.

With strong backing from Senate minority Leader Hugh Scott (R-Pa.), who is a member of the committee, Cannon said, "The idea is that if the public has knowledge of where his interests lie" that would be adequate protection against possible conflict.

A Rockefeller spokesman said after the committee meeting "there is no question" that the nominee will make full public disclosure of his assets, as the committee wishes.

Cannon said he has read the bulk of the FBI reports on the nominee and sees nothing so far that could cause unforeseen difficulties.

But he said Rockefeller at

the hearings will be asked to discuss the Attica, N.Y., prison riots, in which he approved a police assault which resulted in many deaths; his state's liberal abortion law; his role in construction of the Albany South Mall building project; and his expenditures in past election campaigns (he was elected New York governor four times, and also sought the GOP presidential nomination several times).

Cannon also said he believes Senate action on the nomination will be wound up before the Oct. 15 congressional recess announced yesterday by Democratic leaders (completion of House action by then appears far less likely.)

Although Cannon didn't announce it, it was reported that black activist Angela Davis, the right-wing organization Liberty Lobby, the anti-abortion Right to Life group and the National Lawyers Guild all have requested time to testify. The committee may force one or all of them to give their statements in closed session to avoid "defamatory" statements against the nominee or demonstrations outside the hearing room. Anti-abortion groups demonstrated against Rockefeller on the Capitol steps several weeks ago.