

Vice President

Congress Plans Lengthy Probe Of Nixon Choice

Washington

An exhaustive congressional investigation of President Nixon's appointment for Vice President was promised yesterday, but how Congress will proceed to consider it is still up in the air.

House Speaker Carl Albert told reporters that he and Senate majority leader Mike Mansfield are agreed that each house will act separately on the nominee, who must by law be approved by a majority vote of each house.

Albert said he would refer the nomination to the House Judiciary Committee, whose chairman, Representative Peter Rodino (Dem.-N.H.), promised "the most searching kind of inquiry" that could last for weeks.

In fact, Rodino would not rule out the possibility that the investigation to assure that Spiro Agnew's replacement is qualified to become President and is without taint might continue through the end of the year.

In the Senate there is a tug of war between the Rules Committee, which Mansfield said has jurisdiction, and others who want either to create a select committee to consider the nomination or give the Judiciary Committee a piece of the action.

A bipartisan Senate meeting yesterday afternoon produced no agreement except that most would like to hold joint hearings with the house. This would avoid the necessity for the nominee to go through two possible lengthy hearings.

Mansfield said he reported this to Albert, who seemed personally approving, but said he would have to discuss it with other House members and would give Mansfield an answer this morning. It seemed unlikely that House members would want to be part of a joint investigation, both because they prefer to do their own work and would be pushed out of the limelight by better-known senators.

Senate Democrats and Republicans will hold party caucuses of all members this morning to try to decide who among them will consider the nomination.

Rodino, assuming his House Judiciary Committee will consider the nomination on its own, said an exhaustive inquiry is needed because "in the light of recent experience ... the country is in a state of tension and faith in government must be restored."

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