

Mondale hits choice of Ford

By Stephen Cook

Senator Walter F. Mondale of Minnesota, a possible Democratic presidential candidate for 1976, was one of the few members of Congress yesterday to criticize the nomination of House Republican Leader Gerald Ford for Vice President.

Ford is "a fine man" and will probably be quickly confirmed for the office by his congressional colleagues, Mondale said during a visit here.

But "he's not a strong person in the context of the presidency. I don't think he meets the qualifications of the presidency in the broadest sense of the word."

Mondale, who admitted he is inclined to vote for confirmation of Ford, declined to name a better candidate for the job.

"There are many able, public spirited, well meaning Republicans in this country — not a lot, but some. He (President Nixon) could have selected one of them."

Mondale said he believes Ford's statement that he has no intention of running for president or vice president in 1976.

He added that he would not be at all concerned should he find himself contending with Ford for the presidency in three years.

Mondale accused the Nixon administration of exploiting the "reservoir of good will, faith and patriotism that exists in this country" with "Watergate and a series of actions which abuse the American people's rights and liberties. . ."

Mondale predicted "the most serious constitutional crisis in history" should the

Supreme Court order the President to produce the tape recordings pertaining to the Watergate scandal and should he refuse to comply.

"Then," he said, "we will

hear some serious discussion of impeachment."

Earlier, Mondale told a gathering of single mothers at the Junipero Serra Child Care Center that he will

soon reintroduce a Nixon-vetoed child development bill to provide child care and early education to poor children and children of working parents.