

OCT 18 1973

No 'Cronyism'

Demos Agree on Full Ford Probe

Washington

House Democrats, warned against succumbing to "cronyism," agreed informally yesterday that Congress should take all the time it needs to act on the vice presidential nomination of House minority leader Gerald R. Ford (Rep-Mich.).

"The House should move expeditiously," Speaker Carl Albert (Dem-Okla.) was quoted as telling a closed-door Democratic Caucus, "but we should leave nothing unturned. The reputation of the House is at stake and there could be charges of cronyism if we did not make a thorough investigation."

Some Democrats said if Albert's advice is followed it is unlikely that Congress would vote on confirming Ford's nomination until December.

GOP

One prominent House Republican, Representative Bob Wilson of California, countered that Ford "is entitled to speedy confirmation." He warned that Congress will "get a heap of criticism if it doesn't act before Thanksgiving."

While the Democratic Caucus agreed overwhelmingly with Albert's call for a thorough investigation, it gave scant support to proposals that Congress delay voting on Ford's nomination until the Supreme Court rules on the Watergate tapes case.

Representative Jerome R. Waldie (Dem-Calif.), one of those urging that action on the nomination be linked to the high court ruling, said his position "is distinctly a

minority feeling but the feeling is gaining ground."

IMPTACHMENT

Advocates of the linkage proposal argue that should

President Nixon defy a Supreme Court order to surrender the Watergate tapes he would be impeached and Ford then would be President.

"In acting on the Ford nomination," Waldie told reporters, "I take the position that I will be voting not just on a vice president but also on a likely President and it might be the most important vote in my life."

Waldie, who disagrees with Ford on most legislative issues, also asserted that "Gerald Ford is not qualified to be either vice president or President."

In the Senate, similar proposals to tie the Ford nomination to the high court's tapes ruling also appeared to be making little headway.

Los Angeles Times