

# A CONGRESS DELAY ON FORD EXPECTED

House Democrats Indicate  
They Favor Wide Inquiry

By MARJORIE HUNTER  
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WASHINGTON, Oct. 17—For Gerald R. Ford, the cheering has all but stopped, and the flood of congratulations has dwindled to little more than a trickle. Ahead lies perhaps the most sweeping investigation ever made of an American political figure.

After his appointment as Vice President last Friday by President Nixon, there were predictions that he would win quick confirmation from Congress, perhaps by the end of the month.

Mr. Ford said today that he felt that Mr. Nixon, from the standpoint of politics, "should release the tapes, but I also recognize that serious legal and constitutional issues are involved." He declined to elaborate.

After all, he was "one of the boys," a "member of the club"; he was "good old Jerry," the man who rubbed shoulders every day with the legislators who would pass on his nomination.

This will mark the first time that Congress will be called upon to implement the 25th Amendment to the Constitution. That amendment, which became law in 1967, gives only the barest outline of procedure to be used in filling a Vice-Presidential vacancy.

### Amendment Quoted

"Whenever there is a vacancy in the office of the Vice President, the President shall nominate a Vice President who shall take office upon confirmation by a majority vote of both houses of Congress," is the way the amendment reads.

While many members of Congress, particularly the Republicans, feel that Mr. Ford has no secrets to hide, there is concern on both sides of the aisle and in both houses of Congress that a quick confirmation for one of their own might be politically misunderstood by the American people.

Just today, House Democrats indicated in party caucus that they favored a thorough investigation of the nominee to avoid any embarrassing information surfacing at some later time, as it did in the cases of former Vice President Spiro T. Agnew and last year's original Democratic Vice-Presidential nominee, Senator Thomas F. Eagleton of Missouri.

Mr. Agnew resigned a week ago and pleaded no contest to the charge of income tax evasion. Senator Eagleton was dropped from the ticket by the Presidential nominee, Senator George McGovern, after disclosures that he had undergone treatment for mental depression.

### Some Favor Delay

There are a few Democrats who favor delaying action on the Ford nomination until the issue of the disputed White House tapes has been resolved. President Nixon has until Friday to appeal a United States Court of Appeals ruling of last Friday that he turn over to the Federal District Court the tape recordings that possibly bear on Watergate crimes.

Pending in the House is a "sense of the House" resolution, offered by Representative John Joseph Moakley, Democrat of Massachusetts, and 10 Democratic cosponsors, demanding that no action be taken on Mr. Ford's nomination "until such time as the President has complied with the final decision of the court system as it regards the White House tapes."

Representative Jerome R. Waldie, Democrat of California, said today that if the Supreme Court ordered the President to release the tapes and he refused, then the House should start impeachment proceedings against him.

If that happens, he said, "the matter of Ford as Presidential timber would be of grave concern to the country." "I, for one, think he would not be an adequate President," he added.

But Mr. Waldie said that he and others trying to delay the Ford confirmation until the tapes issue was resolved were in "a small minority right now." All of the House Democratic leaders, for instance, oppose tying the Ford confirmation to the tapes issue.

Representative John J. McFall of California, the House Democratic whip, suggested that any such action would be self-defeating for those who might favor impeachment of the President.

### 'Just Suppose'

"Just suppose we don't confirm a Vice President, and just suppose the Senate is asked to sit as a jury to remove the President from office," he said. "In that case, I can't see many Republicans voting to throw Mr. Nixon out of office and handing the job to Carl Albert, a Democrat."

Representative Peter W. Rodino Jr. of New Jersey, chairman of the House Judiciary Committee, had hoped to start confirmation hearings next week. But he said today that the hearings would not begin until after the committee had received results of a Federal Bureau of Investigation inquiry into the nominee—a check that could take up to three weeks.