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**FORD BACKS STUDY
 ON IMPEACHMENT**

**Says He'll Support Congress
 if It Insists on Another
 Watergate Prosecutor**

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WASHINGTON, Oct. 25—

Gerald R. Ford, President Nixon's nominee for Vice President, said today in answer to questions that the House of Representatives should "carry on" with an inquiry into the question of impeaching the President.

Moreover, Mr. Ford said that he would support demands for creation of a new Watergate special prosecutor's office if a majority of the Congress insisted on it.

Mr. Ford, who is the minority leader of the House, outlined his views minutes after the House Republican Conference implored three White House officials to persuade Mr. Nixon to name a new special prosecutor and to make public the contents of the secret Watergate tape recordings.

Bryce N. Harlow, a counselor to the President, told newsmen that the Republican requests would be conveyed to Mr. Nixon and that the President would decide "very shortly" whether to name a successor to Archibald Cox, the special prosecutor who was discharged Saturday.

But Democrats in the Senate and the House pressed ahead with plans to enact legislation that would grant Chief Judge John J. Sirica of the United States District Court here the

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authority to appoint a Watergate prosecutor totally independent of the White House.

As the public continued to inundate the Capitol with demands for Mr. Nixon's impeachment—Western Union officials reported that more than 230,000 telegrams had been sent to members of Congress since Saturday—there were the following related developments:

¶ Republicans on the House Judiciary Committee charged that Democratic members of the panel, who decided yesterday to pursue and broaden the impeachment inquiry, were engaged in a partisan "fishing expedition."

¶ The President's staunchest supporter on the Senate Watergate committee, Senator Edward J. Gurney, Republican, of Florida, sent a letter to Mr. Nixon urging him to name former Attorney General Elliot L. Richardson to be special prosecutor and to agree that he could not be dismissed without the consent of the Senate. Mr. Richardson resigned Saturday rather than carry out a Presidential order to dismiss Mr. Cox and dismantle the special prosecutor's office.

¶ Democratic Mayor of Boston, Kevin H. White, suggested that Congress provide for a new national election if both the Presidency and Vice-Presidency were to be vacated. He cited a 1792 law as precedent.

Mr. Ford's support for continuation of the impeachment inquiry was the latest indication that the impeachment movement had not collapsed, as the White House apparently hoped it would, as a consequence of Mr. Nixon's turnabout on the Watergate tapes issue. The President agreed Tuesday to comply with Judge Sirica's order to turn over the tapes to him.

'We'll Want to See'

At a meeting with newsmen outside the Caucus Room of the Cannon Office Building on Capitol Hill, the Vice President-designate was asked if he would attempt to block Democratic efforts to pursue the impeachment inquiry.

Mr. Ford replied that he still believed the Judiciary Committee should determine whether there were grounds for impeaching Mr. Nixon. He added:

"We'll want to see what the investigation produces. But the investigation, I think, should carry on."

He said that he still had "reservations" about removing the Watergate investigation from the Department of Justice, but he added, "If a majority of the members of Congress feel that is the proper action, I certainly would agree to it."

Mr. Ford declined to say how Congress could be assured that a new prosecutor appointed by the President would be immune from White House pressures. He said, however, that any White House appointee to succeed Mr. Cox "probably ought to be brought before the Senate and his views, and his guidelines, be properly brought out."

Members who took part in the closed meeting of the House Republican Conference said that there was almost universal insistence on the appointment of a special prosecutor and little



Associated Press

Vice President-designate Gerald R. Ford, right, with Charles Alan Wright, White House counsel, after a meeting yesterday during which House Republicans and White House personnel were briefed on the President's action concerning the tapes and other recent events.

vocal opposition to requests for disclosure of the contents of the Watergate tapes.

Representative John B. Anderson of Illinois, chairman of the Republican conference, said that there had been a "frank and forthright" exchange between the House members and the three White House officials—Mr. Harlow; Leonard Garment, the White House legal counsel, and Charles Alan Wright, Mr. Nixon's special consultant on Watergate legal matters.

Democrats on Capitol Hill appeared increasingly unwilling to settle for any prosecutor whose independence depended on the President.

Seven Democrats announced that they would introduce tomorrow a bill to grant Judge Sirica authority to name the prosecutor. They were Senators Philip A. Hart of Michigan, Sam J. Ervin Jr. of North Carolina, Robert C. Byrd of West Virginia, Edward M. Kennedy of Massachusetts, Quentin N. Burdick of North Dakota, Birch Bayh of Indiana and John V. Tunney of California.

Hearings Are Scheduled

Representative Peter W. Rodino Jr., Democrat of New Jersey, the chairman of the House Judiciary Committee, announced that a subcommittee would begin hearings Monday on a number of similar proposals.

Several Republicans on Mr. Rodino's committee were openly critical of the chairman's statement yesterday that the panel would undertake a "broad scale" impeachment inquiry while simultaneously conducting hearings on Mr. Ford's nomination to be Vice President.

One Republican, Tom Railsback of Illinois, said that the plans of the Democratic majority "could result in an unparalleled fishing expedition" directed at the President.

Representative Edward Hutchinson of Michigan, the

senior Republican on the committee, said that Mr. Ford's nomination should be cleared before any action was taken on the impeachment inquiry. He also said that the committee should not proceed with the investigation of Mr. Nixon's conduct before settling the "threshold question" of what constituted an impeachable offense. In his view, Mr. Hutchinson said, only violations of criminal law could lead to the President's ouster.

Concern Over Vacancy

Representative Robert L. Leggett, Democrat of California, charged in a statement issued today that Mr. Nixon had violated at least seven criminal laws in the Watergate case and other matters.

"Just at a glance," Mr. Leggett said, "I can see a prima facie case of commission of sufficient felonies in Mr. Nixon's record to imprison him for 173 years."

Some members of Congress, including House Speaker Carl Albert of Oklahoma, have voiced concern about leaving the Vice-Presidency vacant amid the impeachment investigation.

Senator Kennedy's staff is known to have examined the Constitution to seek a precedent for calling a Presidential election in the event both the President and Vice President should leave office.

At a news conference today in Philadelphia, Mayor White of Boston said that such a precedent existed in a section of the Succession Act of 1792, which is no longer alid.

The act provided for a national election if there were vacancies in the Presidency, Vice-Presidency, the office of House Speaker and the presidency pro tem of the Senate. But a 1964 Library of Congress study of the Constitution said that it was "unlikely that Congress ever passed a more ill-considered law" and it was stricken by the Succession Act of 1947.