
itor

NYTimes

NOV 8 1973

Succession Alternative

To the Editor:

The discussion of impeachment has not yet seriously enough confronted the integral problem of succession.

The reported impulse to move expeditiously on confirmation of Representative Ford recognizes undeniable and legitimate realities: that the prospective succession of Speaker Albert would create a partisan overtone to impeachment proceedings that could undermine public confidence in the objectivity of the Senate jurors as well as rendering a two-thirds Senate vote more difficult, if not impossible, to achieve, and that in any event an overnight, traumatic change of party control of the Administration would only further delay any recovery of confidence in a functioning Government.

But confirmation of the President's nominee is not the only route to addressing those problems, and confirmation of Representative Ford could lead to others. The instant acceptance of his nomination seemed more a response to his capability to act in a mediating role as Vice President than to any confidence in his abilities as a potential President.

I suggest instead that Representative Ford not be confirmed; that Speaker Albert agree to refuse the office of President or to resign immediately, and that the Senate elect a respected and broadly accepted Republican member as President pro tem, who would thereby succeed to the Presidency. The man who comes most readily to mind is Senator Baker.

JOHN J. KNAPP

New York, Oct. 31, 1973