

Plan for Special National Election

Washington

Senator William D. Hathaway (Dem-Maine) urged Congress yesterday to provide for a special national election if President Nixon should leave office before vice-president-designate Gerald R. Ford had been sworn in as his successor.

"If the President leaves office, the mandate of last year is negated," Hathaway declared. "It seems logical to me to allow the people themselves to decide who shall then receive what only they can rightfully give."

His proposal, and similar legislation suggested in the last few days by members of the House of Representatives, ran into immediate opposition from Mike Mansfield, Senate Democratic leader.

Mansfield told reporters that Congress had "better follow constitutional procedures laid down and play according to Hoyle. This is no time for experimentation."

Congressional observers saw little likelihood of the Hathaway proposal being adopted, in part because of concern among the members of the Democratic majority that such a proposal would be viewed as an attempt to gain a partisan advantage from the Republican administration's domestic difficulties.

But Hathaway's proposal served to illustrate the

growing belief on Capitol Hill that Mr. Nixon might be forced to give up the White House.

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