

Smooth Sailing Through

By Spencer Rich

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Senate Majority Leader Mike Mansfield (D-Mont.) said yesterday that he expects the Senate to vote approval of vice presidential nominee Gerald R. Ford before it goes home Nov. 21 for the Thanksgiving recess.

"We'd like to get it out before Thanksgiving," said Mansfield. "There are no holds" (Requests for delay).

Mansfield said Ford "has done very well in the view of members of the Rules Committee. He hasn't dodged any questions. The impression he's made has been excellent."

House Judiciary Committee Chairman Peter W. Rodino (D-N.J.) has already an-

nounced that he will send the nomination, which needs majority approval in both chambers, to the House floor the week of Dec. 3.

It looks like Ford will win overwhelming support in both chambers, so by Dec. 15 at the latest the Michigan congressman will be the new Vice President of the United States in place of Spiro T. Agnew, who resigned after being fined and placed on probation for tax evasion. Talk of holding Ford's nomination "hostage" for one or another White House concession appears to have faded completely.

The Senate Rules Committee has already completed three days of hearings on the nomination, at

the end of which there were strong indications that Ford had the unanimous support of the nine-member committee.

It will hold another hearing Wednesday, with Americans for Democratic Action, the NAACP, and the Opportunities Industrialization Center-Government and Congressional Relations Service as the witnesses.

ADA opposes Ford. NAACP legislative director Clarence Mitchell said he expects to evaluate Ford's civil rights record, without necessarily endorsing or opposing the nomination. The OIC, a job-training group, reportedly will back the nomination.

The committee will proba-

bly vote on the nomination within a few days after the Wednesday hearing, and send it rapidly to the Senate floor for approval before the Nov. 21 recess.

The House Judiciary Committee will start its hearings Thursday. While it has promised a searching look at the nominee's record, most observers believe the committee will ultimately approve the nomination.

A possible stumbling block was removed yesterday when acting Attorney General Robert H. Bork agreed to permit eight House Judiciary members, rather than only two, to read the 1,700-page file of unevaluated data the FBI assembled on Ford.

Congress Is Seen for Ford

The Senate Rules Committee had agreed to Bork's ground rule that only two members could see the raw file, but House Democrats rebelled.

Rodino's staff said the compromise (four Democrats and four Republicans) was considered acceptable and that Rodino has begun reading the material.

When Ford was nominated Oct. 12 by President Nixon under the procedures for replacing a Vice President laid out in the 25th Amendment to the Constitution in 1967, some Democrats hinted that Ford would be "held hostage." The aim on the part of some was to force the President to produce more executive

documents on Watergate issues. Others speculated that if Ford were held up and President Nixon's Watergate troubles forced him from office, a Democrat, House Speaker Carl Albert, would become President under the Constitution's rules of presidential succession.

Such talk, however, has disappeared, in part because it was unrealistic to think the Republicans would let the Democrats "steal" the

presidency in this fashion, in part because the GOP was fully prepared to accuse Democrats of playing politics with the presidency. Many Democrats believed their party would be highly vulnerable to such charges.

Month's Pay Voted

For 4 Agnew Aides

Associated Press
The Senate passed by voice vote yesterday a resolution to keep four members

of the staff of former Vice President Spiro T. Agnew on the Senate payroll for another month.

When Agnew resigned Oct. 10 and pleaded no contest to one count of income tax evasion, the Senate voted to keep his staff on the payroll for 30 days, as it does when a senator resigns.

When the second extension came up yesterday, Republican Leader Hugh Scott said the employees would only be paid so long as their work related to the Vice President's duties as president of the Senate.

He indicated they would be kept on until Rep. Gerald R. Ford (R-Mich.) is confirmed as Agnew's successor.