

FORD IS CRITICIZED ON VOTING RECORD

Witnesses Are the First to
Oppose His Nomination

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WASHINGTON, Nov. 14—

Representative Gerald R. Ford's conservative voting record on civil rights and other domestic issues came under attack today from his critics as the Senate Rules Committee neared a decision on whether to confirm him as Vice President.

There are indications that the committee will approve his nomination, possibly as early as tomorrow and almost certainly before Thanksgiving.

However, Senator Howard W. Cannon of Nevada, chairman of the committee, said that the panel was still pursuing "various leads" and wanted to check these out before taking a vote. He declined to say what further information was being sought.

The House Judiciary Committee will open its hearings tomorrow into the nomination, with Mr. Ford as the first witness.

Democrats Meet Again

Democratic members of the House committee held another in a series of informal meetings today, discussing detailed information gathered on Mr. Ford by the Federal Bureau of Investigation and staff investigators and attempting to formulate questions to be asked of the nominee.

Today's witnesses before the Senate Rules Committee were the first to oppose Mr. Ford's nomination. A number of House members of both parties had testified in support of the Michigan Republican at earlier hearings.

Opposition to Mr. Ford took several forms, including the following:

Joseph L. Rauh Jr., a vice chairman of the Americans for Democratic Action, said Mr. Ford was unqualified to become Vice President because of his past efforts to weaken civil rights bills, his opposition to key social welfare legislation and his lack of experience in foreign affairs.

Representative Bella S. Abzug, Democrat of Manhattan, argued that action on the Ford nomination should be deferred until the House decided whether to impeach President Nixon and until Congress decided whether to enact legislation for a special election for President and Vice President in the event Mr. Nixon leaves office.

John F. Banzhaf 3d, professor at the National Law Center at George Washington University, urged that the Ford nomination be delayed until Congress determined whether former Vice President Spiro T. Agnew was removed from office legally.

The committee also heard from Clarence Mitchell Jr., Washington director of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, who said he was neither for nor against the nominee but that Mr. Ford's record showed that "he has a narrow-gauge approach to civil rights."

Noting that Mr. Ford and other members of the Michigan delegation in the House "seem determined to turn back the clock" on civil rights advances, Mr. Mitchell said:

"Black people will not tolerate a return to second-class citizenship. We either settle these matters or we'll have a Northern Ireland on our hands in this country."

Both Mr. Rauh and Mr. Mitchell said that, while Mr. Ford often voted for final passage of various key civil rights bills, he usually attempted first to cripple such legislation.

"Congressman Ford's record on civil rights is sufficient in and of itself to disqualify him for the Presidency," Mr. Rauh said.

"At a time when the nation needs a healer, the nominee is a divisive influence who has fought civil rights legislation at every turn."

Johnson Record Cited

Senator Mark O. Hatfield, Republican of Oregon, who is a member of the committee, noted that the late Lyndon B. Johnson, in running for the Senate, embraced the anti-civil-rights platform of Democrats in his native state of Texas; yet, as Vice President and later as President, Mr. Johnson led the nation in far-reaching civil rights advances.

"The record of Mr. Ford as Congressman might not jibe with our standards," Senator Hatfield observed. "But perhaps, together, we can make an ally out of him in civil rights matters."

Mr. Rauh also criticized the nomination of Mr. Ford on the ground that the House minority leader had opposed such key social legislation as food stamps for the needy, aid to public schools, the antipoverty program, minimum wage increases, Medicare and public housing.

"A failure to develop understanding of the needs of the disadvantaged speaks not only in terms of intellect but of compassion," Mr. Rauh said.

In appealing for a delay in the Ford confirmation, Mrs. Abzug suggested that Mr. Nixon might eventually be impeached—as called for in pending resolutions offered by her and several dozen other House members. "The whole sordid mass of Watergate will not vanish from the public eye by replacing the man who is ultimately responsible for it with a man of his choice," Mrs. Abzug said.