

How Ford Sees Credibility Issue

Washington

Vice presidential nominee Gerald Ford told a House committee yesterday there is evidence President Nixon has a credibility problem.

Ford will work to solve it, he said, if he is confirmed.

"There is great national concern about his (Mr. Nixon's) credibility," Ford told the House Judiciary Committee in the first day of hearings on his nomination.

"I don't agree that it is justified, but there is certain significant evidence that it is."

Ford said that in the 15 meetings he has had with Mr. Nixon since his nomination October 10 he advised the President to give the Watergate-related tapes to the court and also make the information public.

"I encouraged him to hold the meetings he is holding this week with members of the House and Senate to explain his position and to hold more press conferences and broaden his contacts by trips to organization affairs throughout the country," Ford said.

Mr. Nixon has scheduled a series of public speeches in the immediate weeks ahead and Ford said "it is important that he do this and I will assist in any way I can."

Some Democrats on the panel indicated Ford faced rough going in the hearings.

Chairman Peter Rodino (Dem.-N.J.) has promised to have a committee recommendation for or against Ford on the House floor not later than December 6.

Representative John Con-

yers (Dem.-Mich.) interrupted the hearings before Ford could read his opening statement to object to taking up the nomination before the committee acts on the 15 resolutions to impeach Mr. Nixon.

"It is totally inappropriate that we should be expediting a nomination by a president who is the subject of a serious impeachment inquiry and whose credibility has been damaged to the extent that even members of his own party are demanding that he resign," said Conyers.

Meanwhile, in a two-hour closed session, the Senate Rules Committee decided to send to the Justice Department for possible prosecution for perjury the testimony of lobbyist Robert H. Winter-Berger.

Ford has denied the testimony of Winter-Berger, who said that he loaned Ford \$15,000 which was never repaid. Committee members said the oral testimony conflicted with a sworn affidavit from Winter-Berger.

"It's very clear that some of the matters he swore to in his affidavit were not true," committee chairman Howard W. Cannon, (Dem.-Nev.) said.

Cannon predicted Senate confirmation of Ford by November 26 or 27.

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