

House Ends Ford Probe, Senate Set to Vote Today

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Gerald R. Ford's nomination as Vice President moved forward in both chambers yesterday as the House Judiciary Committee ended six days of hearings and the Senate prepared to vote on his confirmation today.

The House committee plans to vote on the nomination Thursday, and the full House not later than Dec. 6. Overwhelming approval in both houses is assured.

Senate debate opened yesterday with one known vote against Ford. Sen. William Hathaway (D-Maine), who supports legislation for a popular election when the offices of President and Vice President both become vacant, wants Ford's confirmation delayed until the question of whether President Nixon will be impeached is settled.

Sen. Thomas F. Eagleton (D-Mo.) has told associates he may oppose Ford on grounds that Mr. Nixon may be removed from office and that his successor should be a brainy quarterback rather than a lineman type.

From comments at the hearings or conversations with newsmen it appeared that six or more liberal Democrats on the 38-member House Judiciary Committee may vote against Ford, a House member himself since 1949. But one of them, Rep. John Seiberling (D-Ohio), said he will vote to send the nomination to the floor, even though he may not vote for Ford there, because he feels an issue of such importance should be decided by the full house.

Opposition on the House committee includes feelings that the Michigan congressman has been anti-civil rights and lacks presidential qualities, or that his confirmation should be delayed until the impeachment issue is settled.

Ford, the House Republican leader, was nominated Oct. 12 after Spiro T. Agnew resigned and was fined for tax evasion. This is the first time that provisions of the 25th Amendment to the Constitution have been invoked to fill a vacancy in the vice presidency.

The Senate Rules Committee approved the Ford nomination by a 9-to-0 vote last week. Senate floor debate began yesterday, with Claiborne Pell (D-R.I.), second-ranking Democrat on the committee, calling Ford "a man of integrity, character and probity."

Warm support also came from Sen. Alan Cranston (D-Calif.), who said he had in-

terviewed hundreds of people from his home state and other areas on Ford and concluded that Ford had overwhelming public support and confidence.

Sen. Howard Cannon (D-Nev.), Rules Committee chairman, opened debate with a review of the committee's investigation.

"There are undoubtedly those who will find some of the nominee's policies objectionable, and there may be others who think that Congressman Ford is not the most outstanding candidate available to the President in the selection of a candidate to fill the vacancy in the office of Vice President," declared Cannon.

"The judgment of the committee was and is that the President had the right to choose from among the general citizenry, or from among Republican ranks, a nominee of his own general political persuasion," said Cannon.

Sen. Strom Thurmond (R-S.C.) called Ford "eminently qualified."

However, Sen. Hathaway in a floor speech said, "It is my feeling that a president currently undergoing an impeachment investigation by the House of Representatives should not be allowed to name his potential successor."

So certain is Ford's approval by the Senate today that only one hour has been set aside for debate before the 4:30 p.m. vote.

There were these developments at Ford's final day of questioning by the House Judiciary Committee:

- Rep. Elizabeth Holtzman (D-N.Y.) read to Ford a letter he wrote to a Michigan businessman 2½ years ago saying the citizens lobby Common Cause promotes liberal Democratic views and is "therefore dangerous to our way of life." Ford admitted to "occasionally using political license," and said he was responding to a letter from a person who felt some economic legislation is "undermining the free enterprise system."

- Ford denounced as "ridiculous, naive and hurtful" the compilation of an "enemies list" by former aides to President Nixon. Ford said he had never called his opponents enemies. In fact, he said, all opponents in his 13 House campaigns are his friends.

- Rep. Jerome Waldie D-

Calif.) said he believed that Ford's 1970 attempt to impeach Supreme Court Justice William O. Douglas was a plan concocted with the knowledge of President Nixon after the Senate had rejected his nomination to the court of Clement Haynsworth. Ford said he made the investigation "strictly on my own" and could not recall discussing it with the President.

- Rep. John Conyers (D-Mich.) said he was "deeply disturbed" about the sort of people Ford might place in high administration jobs on the basis of associates he brought with him to the hearings. The only one Conyers mentioned was William Cramer, former Florida congressman and now a Washington lawyer, who Conyers said had a well known anti-civil rights record. Ford repeated his statement that he would not hesitate to endorse Cramer for any government position.

- Committee Democrats closed the hearings as they had begun them, with harsh criticism of the Justice Department's refusal to permit all committee members to read the 1,700-page file collected on Ford by the FBI. The committee unanimously approved a Conyers motion specifying that the committee's agreement for only eight of the 38 members to read the file should not be considered a precedent. Conyers then said he would not go to court to seek permission to read the file.

Ford Rules Out '76, Bid, 'For Now'

HAUPPAUGE, N.Y., Nov. 26 (AP)—Vice President-designate Gerald R. Ford said tonight that for the present he is ruling himself out as a presidential candidate in 1976 and "any time thereafter."

Before addressing an Israeli benefit dinner, Ford told reporters he had "no intention whatever" of running for any political office in 1976" but then added, "I can't speculate beyond saying what my present intention is."

Ford said, "I am very definitely ruling myself out as a presidential candidate . . . in '76 and certainly for any time thereafter."

He then sat down to a \$250-a-plate benefit dinner for the United Jewish Appeal Emergency Fund.