

attack on CREEP cheered

Examiner News Services

CHICAGO — Vice President Ford declared yesterday that President Nixon's 1972 re-election campaign was run by "an arrogant, elite guard of political adolescents."

Ford's stinging criticism of the Committee for the Re-Election of the President set off an unusually loud and long outburst of applause and cheers among about 1000 Republican leaders from a dozen Midwestern states.

The speech by Ford contained the most biting criticism of Nixon's re-election campaign that Ford has made since he became vice president in December. In it he referred to the committee by its double-edged acronym, CREEP.

The committee, Ford said "violated the historic concept of the two-party system in America and ran roughshod over the seasoned political judgment and experience of the regular Republican party organization in the 50 states.

"The fatal defect of CREEP was that it made its own rules and thus made its own ruin."

The audience, including presidential hopeful Sen. Charles Percy and GOP National Chairman George Bush, stood up and cheered when Ford said:

"The political lesson of Watergate is this: Never again must Americans allow an arrogant, elite guard of political adolescents like CREEP to bypass the regular party organization and dictate the terms of a national election."

Ford received another ovation when he said: "Our

Republican party organization must be the vehicle for future elections. If there are any more cliques of ambi-

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ous amateurs who want to run political campaigns in the future, I say let the Democrats have them next time."

He opened his speech noting "I was specifically admonished before coming that I shouldn't talk about Watergate, but with some prerogatives of my own, I'll ignore those guidelines."

He later told newsmen he really was not admonished by anyone and inferred that organizers of the conference indicated they wanted him to speak to the conference them — "Looking Ahead."

In the speech, Ford said, "The political failure of CREEP in 1972 was a failure to reinforce the President's impressive victory, overwhelming mandate, with enough Republicans in the House and Senate to insure the success of his programs at home and abroad. . . ."

The vice president told a news conference his remarks were not cleared with the White House. "I spoke as my own man" he said.

Ford also said "I don't think you should interpret my remarks as a criticism of the President."

Asked if he had intended to divorce himself from the White House or President Nixon's philosophies, he said: "Not at all. . . . I simply said CREEP did a great disservice to the Republican party."

He was asked who was responsible for the appointment of the committee's leaders.

Ford replied, "I wasn't around then."

He said that, in his opinion, the President said to the committee "I'm busy . . . go ahead and run it."

Still, to the Midwestern Republican leaders who heard him, Ford's speech was viewed widely as criticism of Nixon and his close associates.

The president created the committee and appointed the people who ran it. Many



Gerald Ford

—AP Photo

of them have pleaded guilty to law violations or have been indicted for crimes growing out of the Watergate break-in or related incidents.