

Ford Suggests Tape Study by Neutral Party

MONTEREY, Calif., June 22 (AP)—Vice President Ford suggested today that a third party might listen to the Watergate tapes and sort out reported discrepancies between White House and House Judiciary Committee versions.

"If people are questioning the transcripts, I'm sure we can find someone, an unbiased third party, to go over the tapes," Ford said in a news conference.

However, he did not indicate whether he felt President Nixon could be persuaded to go along with such a plan. Mr. Nixon has refused to surrender most of the tapes included in the transcripts, despite subpoenas from the Watergate special prosecutor and the Judiciary Committee.

Several newspapers including The Washington Post, have reported that the committee's version of some of the tapes differs, sometimes significantly, from the transcripts released by the White House.

Ford said the main issue in the House investigation now is "whether President Nixon was involved in the cover-up. The preponderance of evidence is that he is not."

Ford repeated again that he would not be a candidate for any office in 1976.

He said in a Los Angeles television interview on Friday, however, that he believes he has the confidence and ability to be President but is not seeking the job and doesn't anticipate that Mr. Nixon will be forced out.

"I have gone through the process of preparing myself for higher responsibilities," Ford said. "You can't be in Congress 25 years, you can't have the job of minority leader for nine years, and you can't be vice president for as long as I have been or may be without feeling that you have the confidence to understand the problems both at home and abroad and to be able to work for some solutions with Congress and the executive branch."

"I'm ready for whatever contingency takes place," he said. "I don't anticipate it, I don't seek it, but if you have worked as hard as I have at doing the jobs I have done, I don't have any lack of confidence."