

Ford Finally Listens to Some Watergate Tapes

Grand Rapids, Mich.

Vice President Gerald Ford said yesterday that he has listened to several of President Nixon's Watergate tapes and can understand the discrepancies between the White House transcripts of the tapes and those released by the House Judiciary Committee.

Ford, who earlier in his term had declared he did not want to hear the presidential tapes, said at a news conference he changed his mind and asked to hear the recordings to arrive at his own interpretation of their content.

"We got these different versions and as a result of

that I asked to hear them," Ford said.

The vice president said that on one occasion he listened to tapes at the White House and another time listened elsewhere, but he would not say where.

"After listening to parts of them I can understand why there would be different interpretations. If anybody can be 100 per cent certain that their version is any more accurate than anybody else's, you would have to be a genius," he said.

The vice president said he has "read or heard or otherwise absorbed" all the material submitted to the House Judiciary Committee for its impeachment investigation.

Since becoming vice president, Ford had steadfastly refused to listen to the tapes, saying he did not want to become involved in a debate over the evidence and to compromise his status as potential successor to the President.

In response to other questions, Ford said he would not campaign in districts where he is convinced there is a Democratic candidate who is more qualified than his Republican opponent.

Ford returned to his home