

# Congressional Leaders Predict an Extended

## LEGISLATORS CALL FORD 'ONE OF OURS'

Mills Sees Excellent Chance of Passing Bills That He Terms 'Long Overdue'

By DAVID E. ROSENBAUM  
Special to The New York Times

WASHINGTON, Aug. 8—Congressional leaders predicted today that there would be an extended "honeymoon" period in the relations between Congress and the White House.

Senators and Representatives of both parties said that Vice President Ford was "one of ours"—a man who was a member of Congress this time last year—and they said that they expected to work closely and productively with him.

Representative Wilbur D. Mills of Arkansas, whose Ways and Means Committee is considering such far-reaching measures as tax reform and national health insurance, said that he foresaw "an excellent chance of passing long overdue legislation."

Representative Thomas P. O'Neill Jr. of Massachusetts, the House Democratic leader, said that he and Mr. Ford had "diametrically opposed philosophies, but he added, "I have great respect for his honesty, integrity and ability."

### Statement by Mansfield

The Senate Democratic leader, Mike Mansfield of Montana, said, "Congress will go out of its way to be of assistance to him, and I know he will go out of his way to have contacts with us."

The relations between President Nixon and Congress were fractious almost from the beginning of the Nixon Presidency.

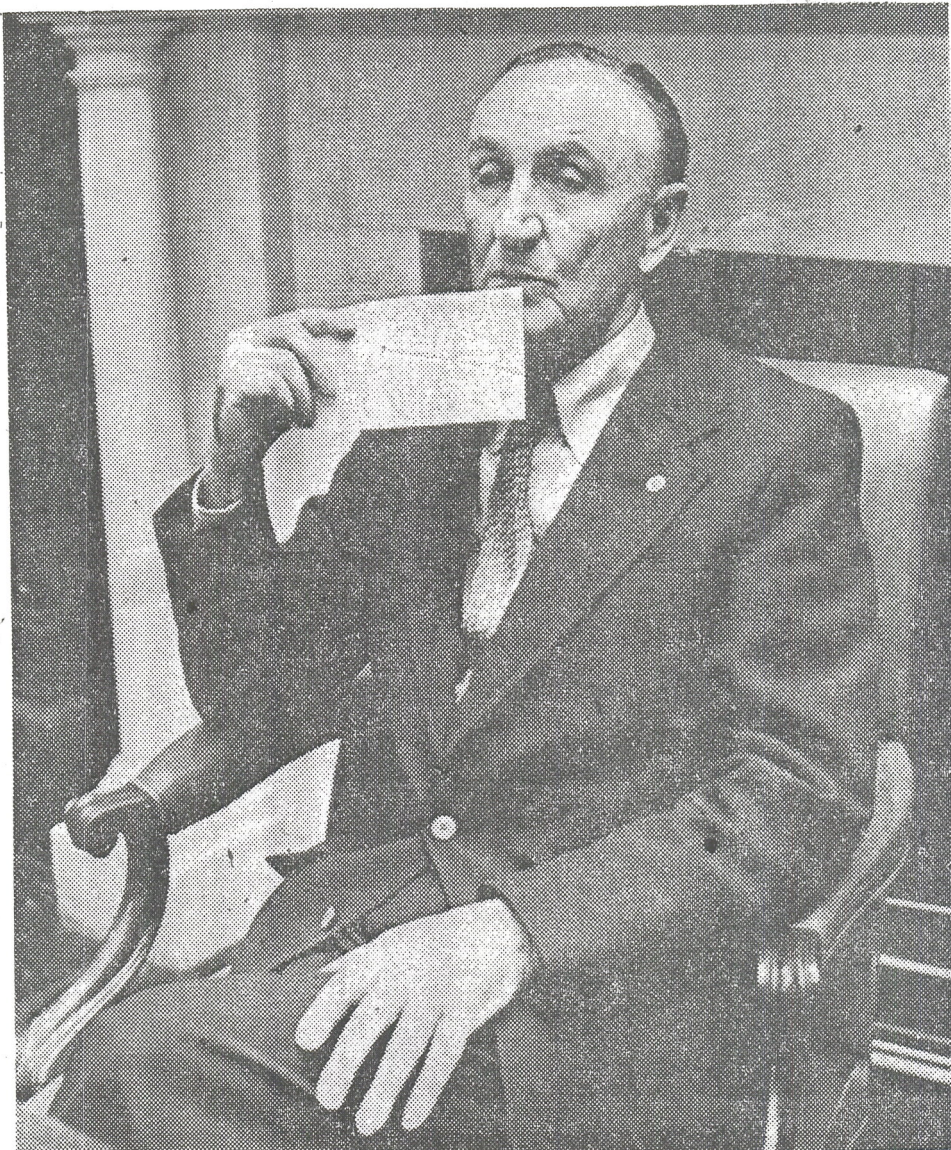
Congressional leaders resented their limited access to Mr. Nixon and felt that they were treated with barely disguised contempt by such Presidential aides as H. R. Haldeman and John D. Ehrlichman.

The result was twofold. On the one hand, the Senate rejected two of Mr. Nixon's Supreme Court nominees and rebuffed him on some of his legislative initiatives, such as his proposal to build supersonic transport airplanes. On the other hand, the President vetoed many important measures passed by Congress and impounded billions of dollars.

Most members of Congress said that they expected an immediate change, with Mr. Ford in the White House.

Senator Bill Brock, the Tennessee Republican, expressed the views of many Senators.

"Jerry has an enormous reservoir of love and affection up here," Mr. Brock said. "So, from that point of view, the honeymoon will last for the rest of his term. There will be differences on policy, of course,



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Majority Leader Mike Mansfield attending a caucus of Democratic Senators yesterday

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but not on the personal level. It's a unique relationship."

Representative Barber B. Conable Jr., a widely respected Republican from upstate New York, said that Mr. Ford was a "creature of Congress" who had "considerable respect for the legislative process."

Some of the most liberal Democrats agreed with Representative Robert P. Drinan of Massachusetts, who was critical of Mr. Ford's conservative views.

#### Ford's Record Scored

"His record in Congress was awful," Father Drinan, a Jesuit priest, said. "He was for the war; he was against tax reform; he sold out to big business; he voted against model cities, tax reform."

But Father Drinan added that Mr. Ford was a "personal friend" of Mr. O'Neill and Carl Albert, the Speaker of the House, and said that their personal relations would be a moderating influence on Mr. Ford.

For Congress, it was a day of uncertainties. Republican leaders were told at a meeting at 11:30 A.M. that the President would announce his resignation tonight, and the word spread quickly.

But there were many questions. What would the President say in his resignation speech? Would he be repentant or combative? Would he seek immunity from prosecution?

Both houses proceeded with planned legislative business. The Senate passed a bill designed to improve rail passenger service. The House approved the campaign finance reform bill.

But, in huddled groups on the floor of both chambers and around news tickers close by the chambers, the Senators and Representatives discussed the overriding matter.

At 6 o'clock tonight, most Republican Senators met in a conference room in the Capitol to talk about the day's events. Senator Jacob K. Javits of New York said afterward, "The country has been saved from a great trauma."

The House leadership seemed prepared to set aside the question of impeachment. Speaker Albert said that the House Judiciary Committee should "wind up its report" but added, "I wouldn't be in favor of impeaching a President who already has left office."

Representative Peter W. Rodino Jr., Democrat of New Jersey, the chairman of the Judiciary Committee, agreed with him.

"At this point, I don't see

it," Mr. Rodino said, when asked if he would seek an impeachment vote by the full House. "I have a sense of sad relief if this is the culmination and the restoration of the country to normalcy."

Mr. Rodino voted against Mr. Ford's confirmation to be Vice President, but today he said:

"I hope Jerry Ford does become President. He's got a constituency he never had as a Congressman and party leader. He is more sensitive to the needs of his new constituency."

Senator Edward W. Brooke, Republican of Massachusetts, introduced a resolution today expressing the "sense of the Senate" that Mr. Nixon should not be subject to prosecution once he left the White House.

A companion measure was put forward by Representative John Buchanan, an Alabama Republican.

"Stepping down from the nation's highest office and sparing the nation a long and harmful trial would be sufficient punishment," Senator Brooke said.

But the proposals, which would have no legally binding effect, were widely opposed by Congressmen of both parties. Many members questioned whether the President should stay out of prison while his subordinates were serving time.

A Democratic Senator asked, "How can I reconcile all those other guys in the bastille and the chief sitting on the beach."

Senator Philip A. Hart, a

Michigan Democrat, asked his colleagues in a speech on the Senate floor whether "we are to place the one person with more power than any other in our land in a position above the law for alleged acts of political expediency and abuse of power, while at the same time continue to punish and exile other Americans who acted out of conscience in refusing to participate in [the Vietnam] war."

Many Senators and Representatives said that they felt an ambivalence expressed by Senator Lloyd Bentsen, a Texas Democrat.

"The question of a President—a former President—being behind bars is personally repugnant to me," Senator Bentsen said. Then he added, "But I'm also caught with the problem that no man should be above the law."

Throughout the day, the regular stream of tourists flowed through the Capitol, craning their necks as usual to spot familiar faces but also seeming to be well aware of the drama that was unfolding at the other end of Pennsylvania Avenue.

But the men and women who led guided tours through the building seemed oblivious to the day's news.

"Here is the Senate, the presiding officer officially is the Vice President," one guide told her group in a nasal monotone. "But he presides only rarely and goes about his more important duties as Vice President."