

# Ford to Explain Pardon In Person to House Panel

**He Offers to Appear Within 10 Days  
to Answer Questions—Lincoln Was  
Last Sitting President to Testify**

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WASHINGTON, Sept. 30—President Ford promised tonight that he would appear personally before a House subcommittee within the next 10 days to answer a series of questions about his pardon of former President Richard M. Nixon.

Mr. Ford made the promise in a letter to Representative William L. Hungate, a Missouri Democrat, who is chairman of the House Judiciary Committee's Subcommittee on Criminal Justice.

Mr. Hungate had written the President 10 days ago, posing about 15 questions about the pardon of Mr. Ford's predecessor that had been raised in two measures called resolutions of inquiry.

Mr. Ford responded by send-

ing transcripts of his Sept. 16 news conference and of an earlier briefing for reporters by his counsel, Philip W. Buchen, saying that the transcripts answered all the questions.

Last week, Mr. Hungate and other members of the subcommittee said that they felt that the response bordered on an insult. Mr. Ford was then sent another letter asking the same questions.

The subcommittee asked Mr. Ford to send a representative of the White House to testify about the pardon before the subcommittee.

In his letter tonight, Mr. Ford stated, "It would be my desire to arrange this hearing before your subcommittee at a

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mutually convenient time within the next 10 days."

Mr. Hungate said that he was "impressed by President Ford's desire to set the record straight personally." Mr. Hungate continued:

"It is consistent with the frankness and the openness he displayed as a Congressman.

"I trust his appearance will make a positive step toward putting the final chapter of the

Watergate affair on the public record so we may at last close this book."

The two resolutions were sponsored by Representative Bella S. Abzug, a Manhattan Democrat, and Representative John Conyers Jr., Democrat of Michigan.

The questions asked dealt with such matters as the legal advice Mr. Ford had received before he issued the pardon, any information Mr. Ford might have had about the state of Mr. Nixon's health and any negotiations that took place between Mr. Ford and Mr. Nixon or their associates.

At his Sept. 16 news conference, Mr. Ford insisted that he had decided on his own to issue the pardon, and he said

that he had done so solely because he thought that it would be in the best interest of the country. He declared that "no deal" had been made before the pardon.

Mr. Ford's decision to testify in person was in marked contrast to the actions of Mr. Nixon, who repeatedly during his Presidency invoked the doctrine of executive privilege to keep his closest aides from appearing before Congress.

Only after the Senate Watergate committee had begun its hearings did the President agree to allowing such assistants as H. R. Haldeman and John D. Ehrlichman to testify before a Congressional panel.

Other Presidents including

Lyndon B. Johnson, John F. Kennedy and Dwight D. Eisenhower also asserted the doctrine of executive privilege to keep matters that they deemed confidential from Congress.

It is not unprecedented for a President to appear before a Congressional committee. Mr. Hungate said, according to The Associated Press, that White House research showed both President Washington and Lincoln had testified while they were in office and that Theodore Roosevelt had testified after leaving office.

Mr. Ford would be the first sitting President to so testify since Lincoln appeared before a committee investigating charges that his wife was a Southern sympathizer.