

FORD MIGHT REPLY TO PARDON QUERY

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Answers to Rep. Holtzman
Not Ruled Out by Nessen

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WASHINGTON, Oct. 18—A spokesman for President Ford said today it would be up to the House Judiciary Committee to decide whether it wanted Mr. Ford to answer further questions on his pardon of former President Richard M. Nixon.

Ron Nessen, the White House press secretary, made the statement in response to questions as to whether Mr. Ford would provide answers to questions put to him yesterday by Representative Elizabeth Holtzman, Democrat of Brooklyn, when Mr. Ford appeared before the committee's subcommittee on criminal justice.

Miss Holtzman, contending that the subcommittee had not scheduled adequate time to get to the bottom of the pardon matter, put her questions rapid-fire to Mr. Ford, who did not attempt to answer all of them. Mr. Nessen said Miss Holtzman "did not give the President much of a chance" to reply but said that Mr. Ford had gone to the hearing prepared to answer all questions.

Mr. Nessen said it would be up to the subcommittee to decide whether it wanted the President to provide written answers to her questions. He thus indicated that Mr. Ford would do so if asked.

The subcommittee, headed by Representative William Hungate of Missouri, is expected to decide whether to continue its investigation when Congress reconvenes after the November elections.

Mr. Ford, in his appearance before the Congressional panel, testified that he granted the pardon Sept. 8 solely "out of my concern to serve the best interests of my country." He said, "There was no deal, period."