

W/C

ELECTION AGENCY OPERATING AGAIN; SUBSIDIES RESUME

MAY 22 1976

\$3.2 Million Approved for 9

Candidates After New
Commission Is Sworn

NYTimes

By WARREN WEAVER Jr.

Special to The New York Times

WASHINGTON, May 21—The flow of political subsidies to Presidential candidates and major parties was resumed today after a two-month freeze when the Federal Election Commission was reconstituted by Congress and President Ford.

Meeting for the first time with its powers fully restored, the agency rapidly approved more than \$3.2 million in retroactive matching funds payments to nine candidates and \$1 million more to the Republican and Democratic National Committees to help finance their nominating conventions.

6th Member Confirmed

Candidates who moved swiftly enough picked up their checks at the Treasury Department before it closed for the weekend. It was the first subsidy money they had received since a January order by the Supreme Court went into effect on March 23, immobilizing the commission in most respects.

At that, it took a long day of relatively frenetic activity to revive the commission and release the money.

First the Senate Rules Committee and then the full Senate had to confirm a new commission member, William L. Springer of Illinois.

Then President Ford had to swear in Mr. Springer and five other members, all of whom were reappointed after serving for the last year. Finally the commission met, elected a new chairman, approved the retroactive subsidy payments and dispatched the necessary authorization papers to the Treasury.

New Chairman Named

The President was the biggest beneficiary of the day's events, getting a check for more than \$1.3 million. His Republican challenger Ronald Reagan qualified for more than \$500,000. Among the Democrats, Jimmy Carter got \$437,000 and Representative Morris K. Udall \$312,000.

The Republican and Democratic National Committees got \$500,000 each, the third installment on the \$2 million each will eventually receive to finance their conventions.

The election commission chose as chairman Vernon W. Thomson, a Republican who served as Governor of Wisconsin and then seven terms in the House of Representatives. He succeeds Thomas B. Curtis, a Republican who asked not to be renamed to the new commission.

Continued on Page 12, Column 2

Election Body Operating Again; Subsidies for Campaign Resume

Continued From Page 1, Col. 6

sion.

Mr. Thomson was a compromise choice. Earlier the commission split, 3 to 3, between Thomas E. Harris and Neil Staebler, both Democrats.

The closest call in the day's events took place at noon on the Senate floor. Mr. Springer had been unanimously approved by a committee an hour earlier, but the Senate needed to muster a quorum of 51 votes to confirm him, a figure not always readily obtainable on Friday.

Delays on Way Back

However, after a very slow roll-call vote, the clerk recorded 58 votes for the nominee. No one voted against him, and his name was sent to the White House.

In a two-minute ceremony in the Rose Garden, Associate Justice William J. Brennan Jr. administered the oath of office to the six commissioners.

Mr. Ford called it "a very good day for the country and the political process," while acknowledging that there had been "many regrettable delays" in getting the commission back into operation.

It took Congress from the Jan. 30 Supreme Court ruling until May 4 to complete work on the bill reconstituting the commission and making many changes in the campaign law. Then the President had difficulty finding a new commis-

sioner and held up the swearing-in ceremony until all six members had been confirmed, which took more than two weeks more.

At his committee hearing, Mr. Springer left considerable doubt as to his general attitude toward campaign law reform. Asked if he had any reservations about the purpose of the present law, he replied, "As of this date, I have none."

Later under questioning he said he could not recall whether, as a House member, he had voted for or against the 1971 campaign law, predecessor of the current statute. He said he did not remember that the voters of his Illinois district were strongly opposed to the legislation at the time.

In approving campaign subsidies, the commission declined to clear audited figures due Senator Birch Bayh and Sargent Shriver, two inactive Democrats, on grounds that they had failed to file state-by-state breakdowns of their spending, as required.

NASA Funds Approved

WASHINGTON, May 21 (UPI)—The House approved today and sent to the White House compromise legislation authorizing \$3.7 billion for the National Aeronautics and Space Administration for the 1977 fiscal year. The vote was 255 to 20. The total approved is about \$1.8 million less than the Administration request.