Rep. Holtzman Asks Levi For Inquiry on Testimony By Ford at '73 Hearings

WASHINGTON, Oct. 19 (AP)—Representative Elizabeth Holtzman, Democrat of Brooklyn, asked Attorney General Edward H. Levi today to order the Watergate special prosecutor to investigate whether President Ford lied during hearings confirming him as Vice President.

She said a quick and limited inquiry would suffice to prove whether Mr. Ford had lied when he told two Congressional committees in 1973 that he acted on his own and not under orders from President Nixon when Mr. Ford helped block the first Congressional investigation of Watergate.

At the White House, Ron Nessen, Presidential press secretary, said, "The President was asked all those questions by Miss Holtzman three years ago." Mr. Ford has "the same answers" today, he said.

Mr. Nessen read from testimony in which Mr. Ford said he could not recall discussing the first Congressional investigation of Watergate with any White House aides.

Mr. Ford testified under oath that he met twice with Republicans on the House Banking Committee, who later voted with four Democrats to deny subpoena power to the committee chairman, Wright Patman, Democrat of Texas, and thus kill the investigation.

"If Gerald Ford lied under oath in order to conceal Richard Nixon's direct orders that he block the Patman investigation, his action served to hide Mr. Nixon's commanding role in the coverup conspiracy," Miss Holtzman told Mr. Levi in a letter sent today.

She said this would make Mr. Ford part of the overall Watergate coverup and thus part of the jurisdiction of Charles Ruff, the special prosecutor. She said Mr. Ruff should listen to the taped conversations between Mr. Ford and Mr. Nixon that occurred between the Watergate break-in in early October and the 1972 Presidential election.