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REMARKS BY REP. GERALD R. FORD, R-MICH.

BEFORE THE REPUBLICAN NATIONAL COMMITTEE

February 23, 1968

Senator Dirksen, my colleagues in the Congress, members of the National Committee and guests, it's a privilege and pleasure for me to be here. I want to reciprocate as far as Ray is concerned. We in the House Leadership are deeply grateful for his great contribution over the last three years to a stronger and I'm sure a winning Republican Party.

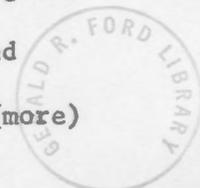
Secondly, I want to express the House Leadership's appreciation to all of you from the various states for the help and assistance that you gave us, particularly in the victorious year of 1966. We made significant gains, as you know. Your contribution to a net gain of 47 has made a tremendous difference in the House of Representatives in the last 14 months. We're grateful for your help. May I add a footnote; we're counting on your additional assistance between now and November 1968.

I believe that 1968 is one of the most important election years in the history of the United States. In the first place we have an opportunity to change the administration, elect a Republican President and Vice President. Secondly, we have an opportunity to make very significant gains in the United States Senate. Thirdly, we have an opportunity to get a majority in the House of Representatives on that fateful day in November of this year.

Obviously it's important to win the Presidency and to make those gains in the Senate, but there is a special significance in winning a Republican majority in the House of Representatives. Apparently 1968 is going to be a political year where there will not be just the two parties contesting with one another. There is the distinct possibility and probability that there will be a third or even a fourth party in all or most of the states of the Union in the presidential race. The net result is that under the Constitution of the United States the election of the President for the next four years could be determined in the House of Representatives in January of 1969.

Under the Constitution if no candidate for the Presidency gets a majority of the electoral votes cast on November 5--and the magic number is 270--then the election of the President goes into the House of Representatives. For that reason it is especially important for us to make significant gains and get a majority in at least 26 of the States of the Union because to be elected

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president in such a contest a candidate must get a majority of the votes of the 50 States in the House of Representatives.

If the election were held in the present House of Representatives, a Democrat would be elected because there are 29 States today with Democratic-controlled delegations and 18 States where the Republicans have control of the delegation. In three states--Oregon, Illinois and Montana--they are tied. Under the Constitution those three States would lose their vote entirely, because if this election does fall into the House each State casts one vote. The vote of the five states with one congressman is as important as large states like California, New York, Illinois, Ohio, etc. because the vote for President is cast state by state.

Let me point out that we have certain states where the delegations are controlled by one party or another by a margin of one.

We have 10 states where the margin is 1 vote; 4 of those are controlled by the Democrats and 6 by the Republicans.

There are 17 states where the delegations are controlled by a margin of 2 congressmen; 11 such states are Democratic-controlled, 6 are Republican.

What I'm saying is that we must be cognizant of the need to protect the vote of the people on November 5 to make certain that the House will reflect the views of the Republican Party by having a majority on our side.

Some people will say that the 1968 presidential election won't be thrown into the House, but let me point out that in 1948 it almost happened and there's a similarity between 1948 and 1968, although there are some differences. In 1948 we had a Democratic President seeking re-election, Mr. Truman. He had a Wallace on his left (former Vice President Wallace) and a McCarthy on his right (the late Senator McCarthy of Wisconsin). In 1968 we could have a little different situation. In 1968 the Democratic incumbent seeking re-election has a McCarthy on his left and a Wallace on his right.

In 1948 a shift of less than 1 percent in 3 or 4 states would have thrown the election into the House of Representatives. I think all of us here are cognizant of the possibility of what might happen with at least a third and possibly a fourth party in the race this year.

Now some people will say that that isn't too bad. But in the two instances that we've had it happen in America, 1800 and 1824, the circumstances that developed in the House of Representatives were not in the best tradition of the United States. Let me quickly review what took place in those two instances

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where the election of the President was determined in the House of Representatives.

In 1800 Thomas Jefferson and Aaron Burr both had 73 electoral votes. It became the responsibility of Alexander Hamilton, who was in the opposition party, to make the decision as to which of those two men would be the President of the United States. They actually had a total of 35 ballots in the House of Representatives without a decision from February 11, 1801 until February 17. Finally Hamilton threw his support to Thomas Jefferson.

All kinds of deals were proposed while the 35 indecisive ballots were taken.

Hamilton was in the unhappy role of choosing between two men he thoroughly disliked. There was for him, however, but one choice, according to historians. Burr was the Catiline of America, a man devoid of scruples and possessed of an inordinate ambition and the boldness and daring necessary to give success to the Jacobin system. Hamilton said in reference to Jefferson (and, I repeat, these are Hamilton's words, not mine), "Jefferson at least had pretensions of character though he was unscrupulous, not very mindful of the truth and was a contemptible hypocrite."

Despite those last observations concerning Thomas Jefferson, Alexander Hamilton supported him, and Jefferson was elected President of the United States on the 36th ballot.

When we turn to 1824 we find four candidates seeking the Presidency: Andrew Jackson, John Adams, Crawford and Henry Clay. Jackson got the biggest popular vote and he had the most electoral votes. But the election was thrown into the House of Representatives because Jackson lacked a majority of the electoral vote. Again we had a circumstance where propositions, schemes, deals were floating around the Nation's Capitol. In this case Henry Clay gave his support to Adams in exchange for appointment as Secretary of State. And so Adams became president although Jackson had the largest popular vote and the greatest number of electoral votes.

What I'm saying is that first we must try to avoid having to bring the election to the House of Representatives. That could be accomplished by the Republican candidate's getting more than the 270 electoral votes on November 5. Secondly, in order to protect the Republican Party and its candidate for the Presidency, but more importantly to make sure that the integrity of our political system is maintained, I say that we must get a majority of the members of the House of Representatives in November 1968. The magic number, as Bob Wilson told

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you today, is a net gain of 31. I think we can get more. I'm optimistic--with the kind of candidates that I see and the support they are getting from all of you and the Party generally. It will be a great day for the country, the free world and all mankind if we can convince the American people that it's in the best interest of all of us to have a sweeping Republican victory this November.

Thank you very much.

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