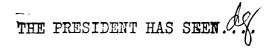
The original documents are located in Box 6, folder "2/28/75 - Young Republican Leadership Conference Reception" of the President's Speeches and Statements: Reading Copies at the Gerald R. Ford Presidential Library.

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YOUNG REPUBLICAN LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE

WHITE HOUSE RECEPTION

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 28, 1975

I WANT TO ADD MY PERSONAL WELCOME TO THOSE OF

BETTY AND SUSAN AND TO CONGRATULATE YOU FOR PARTICIPATING IN

THIS IMPORTANT YOUNG REPUBLICAN LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE.

PERSONALLY, I LOVE TO TALK TO YOUNG REPUBLICANS BECAUSE YOU BRING BACK SO MANY FINE MEMORIES OF <u>MY</u> EARLY DAYS IN POLITICS. I CAN REMEMBER ONE OF MY VERY FIRST SPEECHES. IT WAS GIVEN IN A CHURCH BASEMENT AND YOU CAN IMAGINE HOW NERVOUS I WAS. AND THE BULLETIN BOARD IN FRONT OF THE CHURCH DIDN'T HELP. IT SAID IN BIG, BOLD LETTERS: <u>COME IN AND FIND OUT</u> <u>WHAT HELL IS REALLY LIKE</u> AND <u>THEN</u> THEY LISTED MY SPEECH. TODAY I CONGRATULATE YOU ON THIS YEAR'S THEME ---

ONE OF THE BIG LESSONS OF THE 1974 ELECTIONS WAS THE NEED FOR ALL OF US -- PARTICULARLY THE REPUBLICAN PARTY --TO RETURN TO THE BASICS. WE MUST REBUILD. WE MUST RESTORE CONFIDENCE. WE MUST LEARN FROM OUR LOSSES AND MOVE FORWARD -- LOCALLY, STATEWIDE AND NATIONWIDE. AND THAT MEANS MASTERING THE NUTS-AND-BOLTS DETAILS. Y-R'S. IN THE 1974 ELECTIONS LESS THAN THIRTY-SEVEN PERCENT
OF POTENTIAL VOTERS AGED EIGHTEEN TO TWENTY WERE EVEN REGISTERED.
EVEN FEWER -- UNDER TWENTY-ONE PERCENT -- ACTUALLY VOTED.
THE FIGURE WAS ALMOST AS BAD FOR CITIZENS IN THE TWENTY-ONE
TO TWENTY-FOUR AGE BRACKET, LESS THAN TWENTY-SEVEN PERCENT VOTING.

AMERICA'S YOUNG VOTERS PRESENT A CHALLENGE TO THE

IN FACT, THE ONLY GROUP OF AMERICANS TO GET OUT A

MAJORITY WERE THOSE OF US OVER FORTY-FIVE. ONE OF THE BIGGEST CONTRIBUTIONS YOU CAN MAKE IS TO SELL YOUNG AMERICANS ON REPUBLICANISM. GET THEM TO THE POLLS ON TIME. AS I LOOK AROUND THIS ROOM, I SEE THAT WE HAVE AT LEAST ONE GREAT ASSET. YOU HAVE THE IDEALISM AND THE APPETITE FOR LEARNING AND HARD WORK THAT OUR PARTY NEEDS TO ENSURE ITS FUTURE. IN MANY WAYS, YOUR GENERATION CAN PLAY THE MOST ACTIVE, POSITIVE ROLE IN PUBLIC AFFAIRS SINCE THE FIRST GENERATION OF YOUNG AMERICAN PATRIOTS IN 1776. WE SOMETIMES TEND TO THINK OF THE FOUNDING FATHERS AS

A GROUP OF ELDERLY GENTLEMEN IN POWDERED WIGS. THAT IS NOT

THE WAY IT WAS.

IN 1776, THOMAS JEFFERSON WAS ONLY THIRTY-THREE; JAMES MADISON WAS TWENTY-FIVE; ALEXANDER HAMILTON WAS TWENTY-ONE AND JAMES MONROE WAS ONLY EIGHTEEN. EVEN GEORGE WASHINGTON, WHO HAS COME DOWN TO US AS THE ULTIMATE FATHER FIGURE, WAS ONLY FORTY-THREE WHEN HE ASSUMED COMMAND OF THE CONTINENTAL ARMY. THE CHALLENGES THAT THE YOUNG GENERATION FACED

TWO HUNDRED YEARS AGO MAY HAVE BEEN MORE GLAMOROUS AND

DRAMATIC. BUT THEY WERE NO MORE REAL OR URGENT THAN

THE ONES YOU FACE TODAY.

I KNOW YOU ARE GOING TO MEET THE CHALLENGE OF

TODAY -- AND THAT THE SPIRIT OF 1976 WILL EQUAL THE SPIRIT OF 1776.

IT IS GOING TO TAKE THE SAME IDEALISM -- THE SAME SPARK OF PATRIOTISM AND SENSE OF PURPOSE -- THAT MOTIVATED THE FOUNDERS.

YOUNG REPUBLICANS HAVE THESE QUALITIES --

I CAN SENSE THEM HERE IN THIS ROOM TODAY.

A GOOD PRESCRIPTION FOR AMERICA TODAY IS THE

DEVELOPMENT OF NEW ENERGY SOURCES -- INCLUDING YOUNG

REPUBLICAN ENERGY. THERE IS OBVIOUSLY NO ENERGY SHORTAGE

AMONG THE Y-R'S.

WELCOME TO THE WHITE HOUSE. LET'S WORK TOGETHER TO STRENGTHEN AND EXPAND OUR REPUBLICAN PARTY AND BUILD A BETTER AMERICA.

END OF TEXT