

POOL REPORT ... BURLINGTON, VT. TO RANDREWS AFB 10/7/74

We did not ~~xxx~~ talk to the President. We did talk to Nessen and Dean Burch (at our request). More on that later.

Ford left after speech through a basement door, thus avoiding the large crowd of demonstrators (in the hundreds) waiting on the hill above, at ground level. He could hear the chanting, though. It included: "Eat Shit! Eat Shit!" and "Get the Suck out of Vermont!" He did not pause for reflection, just got in the limo and drove to the airport. As the motorcade was passing thru the parking lot, a firecracker was thrown -- it landed several cars behind the Ford limo, exploding harmlessly on the pavement.

Quick, uneventful drive. He shook hands with his police escort upon arrival and climbed aboard.

At 10:25 pm, just after takeoff, Nessen came back to chat. He said:

\* Ford was working with Runsfeld on "a whole pile of stuff" Runsfeld had brought up.

\* Ford placed a ~~x~~ phone call to his wife from Air Force One because he had not talked to her all day.

\* Neither Ford nor Nessen had any reaction to the protestors ~~x~~, or to the dinner itself.

The pool asked to see Burch. Exit Nessen, enter Burch.

Burch said:

\* "I thought it went well." Stafford and Mallary said it was the biggest political crowd ever in Vt.

\* It raised about \$75,000 -- roughly speaking, 1,500 people at \$50 a head.

\* "I think Dick Mallary's in good shape, and will remain in good shape."

\* After the Tuesday economic speech, ~~xx~~ the economy "will clearly be the theme of the campaign." "Even if it wasn't an election year, it would be mandator for him to get out and start weddling, no selling his economic program." ~~...The President's~~ the big issue is ~~xx~~ inflation -- the economy. It's a decent issue that can be expounded on without slicing at Democrats, and I think that's what he's going to do."

\* About Ford's two-part theme of tonight, he said: "I don't think anybody could disagree with his remarks on the two party system."

\* On the pardon of Nixon: "It's an issue that's been sort of a nagging ~~xxxx~~ thing. .... (He was asked whether the postponement of Ford's testimony before Hu gate's subcommittee would hurt Republican candidates, who would be most glad if people were not reminded about it so close to election day.) He conceded it the postponement would "not help" republicans, & no matter what Ford said. "Some of these things can't be settled, because ~~xxxx~~ people who hear the answers don't particularly like them." Some will think there was a deal no matter what they are told, he said. "Everything that happens in October becomes super sensitive," he said. "Sure it's (the pardon) an issue. The intensity of feeling is high. & But unlike a lot of issues, there's no chapter two -- it's over... I don't believe it will be a live issue for any period of time, because there's nothing to sustain it."

--more--

Burch said of Tuesday's economic speech that it could cause the President and Republicans some problems as well as providing some benefit. The "tragic thing" of economic decisions is that they never please everybody. "There are going to be some hard decisions (in the Tuesday speech)," he said. "And there'll be some flak." But, he said, the economic speech couldn't be postponed for politics. "The theme of the campaign will be that he needs tools to fight inflation, and what he needs more than anything else is a friendly Congress he can work with."

And about money, he said: "Candidates are crying -- absolutely crying-- for money in this year. There's nothing wrong with raising money for candidates."

--schram, mashek, jones.