

November 2, 1974

POOL REPORT

Grand Junction to Wichita

After the speech, Ford worked the crowd behind and in front of the platform for about five minutes. Just before getting into the limousine, Dominick and two unidentified men gave him a white golfing cap with "McCoy Cat" on it in red letters. A few blocks from the baseball field, Ford made a surprise stop at the Grand Junction Veterans Administration Hospital where he greeted twelve wheelchair patients, all male, and most of them elderly, who were drawn up in a line on the sidewalk in front of the hospital. To one of them he said, "God Bless you", and to another he said, "We're very grateful". One of the veterans was stooped over and the President had to crouch to shake his hand. He worked a small crowd at the hospital before climbing into his limousine, where he and Vanderhoof stood up and waved to scattered crowds along Twelfth Street, all the way to the airport. Before boarding, Ford shook hands with local police per his custom.

As soon as he boarded Air Force One, the President met with four leaders of cattlemen's organizations whose names are given in the press schedule. The spokesman for the group was Lee Spann, President of the Colorado Cattlemen's Association. Ford told the group that the government would "try to purchase excess beef and help out as much as we can." The cattlemen congratulated him on his Sioux City speech and urged him to invoke the 1964 act on meat imports. Ford replied "we will as soon as the law permits". Later Nessen said that this referred to the so-called trigger level and said that the President meant that beef import quotas on beef imports would be reimposed if the Agriculture Department determines that the trigger level is going to be exceeded in 1975. Ford has said all of this before.

The President told the group he had directed Secretary Butz to look at the school lunch purchases to see if more ground beef could be purchased for school lunches. Spann said, "that can be done now." Ford then said, "I've got an open mind on it and will wait for a report on it from Butz."

The cattlemen raised the question of dairy imports. Ford said: "don't worry about the dairy import thing. They are not going to import." Later Nessen said that this did not represent any change in policy and that the President meant that he would not permit dairy imports to rise to a point that would threaten the American dairy industry.

The information on the ten minute meeting was relayed to us by Tom Korologos, with clarifications by Nessen.

An important point is that Korologos quoted Ford as saying that he would invoke the 1964 law (and thereby reimpose beef quotas) "as soon as the law permits." But Nessen says that this meant only that quotas would be reimposed "if the trigger point is reached."

Parenthetically, Nessen also mentioned that Ford's 18-year-old son, Steve, is aboard and will return to Washington to see his mother.

(MORE)

...Because the press plane was not permitted to catch up with Air Force One, here is some information on Ford's initial schedule in Wichita:

He will go first to a GOP reception at which 550 people are expected, then drop in at a Shriner's meeting where about 1,500 people are expected, and then go to a reception for the Kansas Republican "Leadership Club", composed of persons giving \$5,000 or more to this year's campaign. About 75 people are expected at that affair, Nessen said. The last event will be the rally, at which about 4,500 people are expected.

Stormy weather in Wichita prompted reports that Air Force One might not be able to land. In the pool car on the way to the Grand Junction airport, Nessen said there was only a "50-50" chance that the President could land in Wichita because of "rain and fog." Fifteen minutes out, there was very considerable turbulence. Air Force One did a lot of heavy rocking.

If you get this pool report, we landed.

Deakin/Rodgers/DeFrank

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