

MAY 29, 1975

POOL REPORT

## Mrs. Ford's Walk through a Shopping Area

There was a nine car motorcade for a sight-seeing, and window-looking trip through downtown Brussels. She wore a red wool dress, grey herringbone cape and a print scarf with white kid gloves. The first place she stopped when she went to the shopping arcade under a glass roof, was a candy store. She was accompanied by the wife of Ambassador Firestone,

In the beginning she seemed oblivious of the press and chatted with Mrs. Firestone and looked at displays of fur coats, Belgium lace, and Sinatra records. People came up to her from time to time, Americans based in Belgium, all to shake her hand and tell her they were happy she was here.

She went into an antique store and patted an Egyptian statue, with a sphinx-like air to it and said, "It is a lovely lady." The proprietress of the antique store couldn't speak English and Mrs. Firestone had some difficulty in translating between the two of them, so an employee of the embassy came over and translated prices. She looked at a blonde lacquer table and said, "I have never seen blonde lacquer before." She looked at another \$4,300 table and said, "I like that. I think it is stunning." She asked somebody to translate francs into dollars and said, "Do you have a computer?" She then looked at a large stone egg and quipped about the goose that laid the golden egg. She was very interested in an hourglass that measured four hours and admired some porcelain figurines that were about three inches high -- especially one of a swan, "It is lovely. That's an intriguing piece. I like children and animals," It cost \$210. The woman who owned the shop offered it to her, but Mrs. Ford said she couldn't accept, "But I greatly appreciate it."

Mrs. Ford heard a personal story about crime in Europe. The owner of the store told about how it had been broken into earlier in the week and that one of the criminals had been apprehended. It was a long story and Mrs. Ford nodded and looked appropriately concerned.

While she was walking, the vice president of the shopping arcade presented her with roses. The crowds clapped for her at one point and the owner of a fish market blew kisses to her from his window and tried to entice her inside with a raw shrimp. Outside of a jewelry store she said that she liked antique jewelry. "So much prettier than the new. There's one piece here with no price, so I guess it must mean it is too expensive." Later she said in front of a chocolate store, "This is no place for Jerry, he'd be tempted by the chocolate." She said that Mrs. Firestone had left chocolate in their embassy bedroom and she said, "I wish they'd take it out, it is not good for his diet." Mrs. Firestone quoted the Duchess of Windsor as having told her staff of servants, "If there is anything I like, remove it." Mrs. Ford said, "That sounds like a very good idea."

She and Mrs. Firestone discussed their children and fashions as they walked along. She told her that Susan was tall enough to wear the longer fashions but both ladies agreed they didn't feel as comfortable as they might in them. During a picture taking session, at the historic Grand Place, she waved at Presidential Assistant Bob Hartmann and asked if he had gotten her picture.

She later went for lunch at the Villa Lorraine with Mrs. Greenwald, Mrs. Bruce, Mr's. Rumsfeld, and Mrs. Firestone.

# # #