

POOL REPORT

JULY 31, 1975

Mrs. Ford's Sightseeing Tour

Mrs. Ford, as announced earlier, toured the open air museum on the Island Seuraswari. On the island are farm houses transported from various parts of the country. Mrs. Ford was accompanied by the Lord Mayor of Helsinki, Teuvo Aura, who said "you are seeing quite a lot of our hometown." They walked among young women outfitted in native costumes. Mrs. Ford spent considerable time watching flax being beaten and woven into linen... one of the end products being baskets. An elderly man and woman use old fashioned spinning wheels for weaving. Mrs. Ford spoke freely with both the Finns in her party and the weavers, commenting to one man that he must be very strong to do such work. She then watched some native dancing and clapped her hands at one point to the music. She seemed to especially enjoy this part of the tour. She was taken inside a building to watch more handiwork; Pooler did not accompany her. She came outside and Pooler asked if visits such as this are one of the better parts of being First Lady. "I should say so... one of the really delightful parts... this was very gay, very festive... it was beautiful and cheerful to see." Asked if Finland reminds her of the upper Midwest back home she said: "Yes, I'd say so... especially Minnesota and maybe northern Wisconsin." Asked if she got a better feel for this country than on other Presidential stops because of the lengthy stay here, she said: "I think that's true... it's natural... the other countries were such a short time... Often going from the airport to the palace... there was little time for sightseeing (on other stops), so this is a special treat." Earlier Mrs. Ford had admired some white gloves, picking one of them up and then putting it down. She told an elderly lady who apparently had made them that they were beautiful. About ten minutes later, the woman stepped in front of Mrs. Ford suddenly and presented her with the gloves. Mrs. Ford seemed surprised and very pleased, saying that the gloves would be excellent for cross country skiing.

Her next stop was the monument to Danish composer, Jean Sibelius (1865-1967). The ultra-modern monument by Eila Hiltunen, somewhat resembles cast iron organ pipes. Mrs. Ford noted that high winds rustling through them might produce beautiful sounds.

Mrs. Ford then proceeded to dockside at Katajanokka Pier for departure to the Valhalla Restaurant on Suomenlinna Fortress Island. Pooler did not see departure because his bus got lost. In any case, White House press did not accompany her for the luncheon. Press Office's explanation was that reporters would have been stuck on the island until late afternoon.

John Cochran, NBC

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