

August 10, 1975

POOL REPORT

I have a pool report on the political meeting.

The President arrived at the Sheraton Motel and briefly shook hands with the line of people waiting outside to applaud him.

He went into a room called Butterfield I, and there were 30 Republican leaders from Arkansas attending the meeting, all sitting around in a kind of oval-shaped arrangement.

Ron Nessen provided a briefing afterwards and described it as "The most non-political political meeting I have ever attended."

He said the people in attendance clapped when the President entered. The President said, "I really don't want to make a speech," and he spoke for only about five minutes reviewing his energy and economic programs, and then he said, "Between now and the election, I intend to spend my time primarily being President." That is a quote.

It is, "Between now and the election, I intend to spend my time primarily being President. I am going to maximize my time on the job."

This is another quote, not a continuation of that quote. He said, "I am convinced in 1976 Arkansas can be a Republican State."

After those five-minutes of introductory remarks, he was asked series of questions, none of which were really political in nature. They had to do with issues such as revenue sharing, housing, they asked him to explain his proposals for Saturday Night Specials. They asked about the highway bill and about the proposal to extend the decontrol of oil.

At the end of the meeting, they gave him a small pin in effect honoring or making him an honorary member of something called the Golden Tusk Club, and they applauded and that was the end of the meeting.

The pool was not inside. This is all from Nessen.

Just prior to take off, the President was interviewed by some local television reporters. He noted that 134,000 had been resettled here in the refugee program thus far.

He mostly spoke on commending people for their response to the refugees, to receiving the refugees. He said, "We hope to complete the program on schedule and hope that it will be completed in the fall sometime as planned."

He said, "We will make every possible effort to complete the total program late this fall."

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He said he had not had a chance to compare notes on his visit to the refugee camp today with Mrs. Ford's visit to Camp Pendleton four months ago. He said, "Things are running more smoothly now, and we hope they will continue to."

He said he has heard no criticism of what is being done in the refugee program now. He was asked about the decontrol of oil prices. He said the heavy odds are that he will veto.

He repeated, "The heavy odds are, I will veto the Congressional legislation." He said, "I think that is the way to stimulate additional production. I think there won't be any serious inflationary reaction."

He said if the legislation is vetoed, that he is exploring ways to mitigate the inflationary impact.

That is it.

Dean Fisher - Time:
Roy Bode - Arkansas Gazette