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THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

January 24, 1975

ME

MEMORANDUM TO: THE PRESIDENT

THROUGH: THE STAFF SECRETARY

FROM: ROLAND L. ELLIOTT *RE*

SUBJECT: Incoming Mail for the
Week of January 20-24.

This past week, Presidential mail has been coming in at a rate of slightly more than 6,000 pieces a day (wires and letters) for a week's total of about 32,000. Of this amount, a little less than half is the routine case-work and agency referral mail.

Of the remaining balance, about 15,500, the single largest category of mail is in response to your State of the Union Message. The total for this is approximately 4,300 and breaks down as follows:

PRO	-	960
CON	-	2,420
COMMENT & QUESTIONS	-	918
(No position taken)		

The second largest volume is in response to your January 13 address; a total to date of 3,500:

PRO	-	875
CON	-	1,800
COMMENT & QUESTIONS	-	825
(No position taken)		

Writers in the PRO category (both for the State of the Union and January 13 speech) say your messages were "hard-hitting," "well done," "statesmanlike," "splendid," and reflected "superb leadership."

The CON mail objects to a variety of things including the Federal deficit, relaxation of environmental standards, nuclear power plants, and the 5% ceiling on Social Security and Federal pay increases. However, the major criticisms -- and this runs through 50% of the CON mail -- are: (1) the middle and lower income groups are once again going to be hardest hit, and (2) complaints about higher fuel costs as a result of import tariffs (roughly a third of these writers say they would prefer rationing).

However, after your January 21 Press Conference in which you outlined some of the implications of gas rationing, there has been a growing trend in support for the import tariff as opposed to rationing. We have received just under 500 pieces as a result of your Press Conference:

PRO	-	200 (support your energy proposals)
CON	-	260 (favor rationing)
COMMENT	-	25
(No position taken)		

In a related matter, there is a small but distinct segment of mail critical of your plans to travel across the country to explain your program to the people, i.e., "you should set an example by staying home and not wasting fuel traveling." So far, only 150 letters on this have been received, 130 of which are critical.

Other incoming mail is of the more routine variety including some 3,200 children's letters on a variety of subjects, 1,200 birthday and anniversary message requests, 300 photo and autograph requests, and many other miscellaneous subjects.

In summary, the mail reflects a clear concern over the economy and energy. About 359 express firm support for your efforts to resolve the difficulties. Another 22% (the COMMENT mail) seem unclear or confused as to precisely what is being proposed. The balance are opposed, largely because of anticipated increases in fuel costs which they believe will lead to further inflation and/or result in an excessive burden on the poor and middle class.