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THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

November 18, 1976

ADMINISTRATIVELY CONFIDENTIAL

MEMORANDUM FOR:

PHIL BUCHEN

FROM:

JIM CONNOR *JEC*

The President reviewed your memorandum of November 17 concerning a column written by David Wilson of the BOSTON GLOBE and made the following notation:

"Excellent and I appreciate. Can Ron Nessen get me a copy from the GLOBE?"

I am sending Ron Nessen a copy of this memo to see if he can arrange for the President's request.

cc: Dick Cheney
Ron Nessen

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

1940
Phil Buckner)

Excellent & 2 appreciate.
Can Roy G. get me a
copy from the Hall.

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

November 17, 1976

MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT

FROM: PHIL BUCHEN *P.*

Attached is a copy of a column written by Bunny's cousin, David Wilson, of the Boston Globe, which Bunny would like you to see.

wilson

tuesday

DAVID B. WILSON

President Ford is reported to be planning to move back to his old house in Alexandria, Va., collect a splendid pension, maybe write a book and continue to interest himself in the Republican Party and the nation. He also, presumably, will play a lot of golf.

Will it be enough? Can a man who has been intensely and intimately involved with power for almost a quarter-century in Congress and for two years as Chief Executive be satisfied with the role of not-so-elder statesman?

Perhaps. Right now, the golf course and the ski trails must irresistibly beckon. The man has been hurt. Yet it cannot be said that he has been either disgraced or overwhelmingly rejected.

He took the Presidency not intending to seek it, inheritor of a scandalously discredited Administration. His party counts fewer than one in five registered voters on its ~~rolls~~^{rolls} and is ideologically and regionally split. He had to bear responsibility for a disastrously unpopular and courageous decision to pardon Richard M. Nixon. His brief incumbency came in a time of economic crisis for which he could not fairly be blamed.

He leaves office with the respect and affection of his countrymen, and it cannot be argued that he fared badly at their hands. If ever he had longed for the office of President, he must have put aside that ambition long before the roof fell in on the Nixon White House.

Gerald R. Ford is 63 years old, just one year older than in 1828 was John Quincy Adams when Adams, savaged by the demagoguery of the Jacksonian democracy, was driven from the White House, his Administration, but not his reputation and intelligence, in ruins.

(3)

Two years later, Adams ~~ran~~^{ran} for Congress. Some of his Boston friends were aghast. When they suggested that it was degrading for a man who had been President, Secretary of State and ~~Ambassador~~^{Ambassador} to Great Britain to seek so lowly a position, Adams replied that no person could be degraded by serving the people as representative in Congress or, for that matter, as a selectman in his town.

Three years later, Adams confided to his diary some thoughts which apply rather nicely, I think, to the political career of Gerald R. Ford. Adams wrote:

"My whole life has been a succession of disappointments. I can scarcely recollect a single instance of success to anything that I ever undertook. Yet, with fervent gratitude to God, I confess that my life has been equally marked by great and signal successes which I neither aimed at nor anticipated."

Adams, under James Monroe, was almost certainly our greatest Secretary of State. His ~~Presidency~~^{Presidency} was a disaster not really of his own making. But he found his true role and enduring reputation as a member of Congress, where he served nine terms, battling against slavery, assuring the establishment of the Smithsonian Institution and defending civil liberties.

He was fatally stricken on the floor of the House Feb. 21, 1848, inveighing against the presentation of comic-opera swords to the generals in what he termed the "most unrighteous" Mexican War.

Adams, too, was a kind of accidental President. In 1824, Andrew Jackson won a plurality but not a majority of the electoral vote and the issue was ~~decided~~ ^{decided} in the House of Representatives by an alliance of Adams and Henry Clay. Jackson never let Adams forget it, as the Democrats never let Ford forget Watergate.

The Adams descendants may not welcome this comparison. Jerry Ford is no John Quincy Adams.

Ⓐ These are difficult, different times. Congress, wracked by disclosures of sleazy misconduct and flayed by reformist zeal, is perhaps even less attractive a prospect than it was in 1830.

At the same time, the Congress and its static Republican minority ~~both seem~~ ^{both seem} desperately to need leadership of the stature a respected former President might provide. The Adams ~~example~~ ^{example} may, in time, hold some attraction for a man to whom Capitol Hill was home base for 26 years.

One can hope so without exactly expecting Jerry Ford to return to the House. What is certain is that it would be a shame to lose him to the ~~links and the slopes.~~ ^{links and the slopes.} Public life in America would be a poorer place in his absence.