

The original documents are located in Box 4, folder “12/5/74 - Remarks at Breakfast for Defeated Members of Congress” of the President’s Speeches and Statements: Reading Copies at the Gerald R. Ford Presidential Library.

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THIS INCIDENT HAS BEEN

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PRESIDENTIAL REMARKS AT
BREAKFAST FOR DEFEATED MEMBERS OF CONGRESS

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 5, 1974

FRANKLY, I DON'T QUITE KNOW HOW TO BEGIN THIS LITTLE

TALK. NORMALLY, I WOULD SAY TO AN AUDIENCE HOW GLAD I AM

TO SEE SO MANY OF YOU HERE TODAY. . . BUT ON THIS

OCCASION, I WOULD HAVE MUCH PREFERRED SPEAKING TO AN EMPTY

HOUSE.

THERE'S AN OLD SAYING THAT GOES: THE TROUBLE WITH BEING

A GOOD SPORT IS -- YOU HAVE TO LOSE TO PROVE IT.

RECENTLY, SENATOR WALTER MONDALE SAID HE DIDN'T HAVE
THE SPIRIT TO COPE WITH A PRESIDENTIAL CAMPAIGN. I HOPE THAT
THE FEELING IS CONTAGIOUS.

ONE OF THE MASTER POLITICIANS OF THIS CENTURY, WINSTON
CHURCHILL, UNDERSTOOD THE CHANGING WHIMS OF PUBLIC OPINION WELL.
IN RECENT DOCUMENTARIES MARKING HIS 100TH BIRTHDAY, FILMS SHOWED
LEADING FIGURES IN BRITISH POLITICS WHO DISMISSED CHURCHILL IN THE
1930'S AS A "LOST CAUSE."

A FEW YEARS LATER, HE ELECTRIFIED AND UNIFIED THE WESTERN WORLD
WITH HIS BRILLIANT WARTIME LEADERSHIP . . . ONLY TO FIND HIMSELF,
DAYS AFTER THE WAR'S END, OUT OF OFFICE. HE DESCRIBED THE
FORTUNES OF OUR PROFESSION THIS WAY:

"POLITICS ARE ALMOST AS EXCITING AS WAR, AND QUITE

AS DANGEROUS. IN WAR YOU CAN ONLY BE KILLED ONCE BUT IN

POLITICS MANY TIMES."

SO YOU ARE ALL IN GOOD COMPANY WITH CHURCHILL AND
LINCOLN. LIKE THOSE TWO, I HOPE EACH OF YOU WILL RETURN TO
THE POLITICAL ARENA -- BECAUSE YOUR EXPERIENCE AND KNOWLEDGE
ARE NEEDED.

IN FACT, BOTH ARE NEEDED BEFORE YOU LEAVE YOUR
PRESENT POSITIONS.

IN THE FADING DAYS OF THIS CONGRESS, THERE ARE A NUMBER
OF VITAL MEASURES WHICH DEMAND ACTION. ONE IS THE
CONFIRMATION OF NELSON ROCKEFELLER AS VICE PRESIDENT. ANOTHER
IS PASSAGE OF THE FOREIGN AID BILL. ANOTHER IS THE TRADE REFORM
BILL. ALL OF YOU KNOW AS WELL AS I DO THE IMPORTANT PIECES OF
LEGISLATION THAT STILL REQUIRE CONGRESSIONAL ACTION -- AND I AM
SURE YOU ARE DEDICATED TO COMPLETING THIS UNFINISHED BUSINESS
BEFORE THE 93RD CONGRESS COMES TO AN END.

AFTER THIS PHASE OF YOUR POLITICAL CAREER CLOSES,
AMERICA WILL CONTINUE TO FACE PROBLEMS REQUIRING YOUR ENERGY
AND EXPERTISE. BUT WHATEVER PATH YOU CHOOSE, TO EACH OF
YOU THE BEST OF LUCK -- AND GOD BLESS YOU.

END