

## POOL REPORT ON PRESIDENT. . SATURDAY NIGHT, 2/]/75

The President and Mrs. Ford arrived at the Sheraton Park shortly after ~~9~~ 9 p. m. to attend the annual Mardi Gras Ball given by the Louisiana State ~~m~~ Society.

The President was in black cutaway, Mrs. Ford in a pale coral gown. After their introduction to a crowd of at least 2,500. the Fords relaxed at a table in front of the stage. Susan arrived a bit later. There followed a series of festivities including presentation of queen and princesses in the society's annual contest, (Susan was named a princess and escorted by Louisiana Sen. Johnston), and then a miniature Mardi Gras parade around the huge ballroom, with costumed characters throwing necklaces of beads and other souvenirs into the cheering crowd.

About 10:30, dancing began. during an initial series of dances for the ball's "crew" and partners, Mrs. Ford danced with some of the costumed folk. and one turned out to be Sen. Long. Later, the President and First Lady danced. A bit later yet, the Marine Corps Drum & Bugle Corps entered and played some tunes. and the Fords went up on stage to pay their respects to the King and Queen of the ball.

The President and Mrs. Ford left the dance at 11:30 and returned to the White House.

--jim upshaw, NBC