

POOL REPORT NO. 2

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President Ford's Arrival at Presidential Palace

After they shook hands, President Ford told President Urho Kekkonen that he was in good shape (Ford's instincts were correct. Last year a doctor told Kekkonen, who will be 75 in September, that he had the constitution of a man of 45. Kekkonen is a long distance skier, jogger, water skier and sports enthusiast.)

As they sat down to confer, Ford confided that "I try to keep my weight down -- not enough exercise."

Ambassador Mark Evans Austad interjected: "Did you hear he (Ford) took a sauna already?"

"First I had the beating -- with the birches," Ford said. "How did you like it?" Kekkonen asked. "Oh, delightful," Ford replied.

"Who does the beating, Mr. President?" Kissinger asked archly. "I did it myself," the President replied.

"We have many people of Finnish origin in the northern part of Michigan, my home state," Ford told Kekkonen. "Minnesota," Kekkonen said with a nod. "They run the state up there and they run it well," Ford responded. At this point, your pool was shown to the door.

The Presidential palace is a three story brindle-colored structure with white trim. That was originally built for the Russian Governor General of Finland. (We refer you to the bible for more details.) Its architectural style in the United States would be called modified Federal.

The two Presidents met in a small, second floor room done in yellow rice wallpaper, gold drapes, and with a parquet floor. Its windows open onto a balcony which overlooks the city's South Harbor.

President Ford sat with his back to the windows in a chair at President Kekkonen's right. Across a small oval table, Kissinger sat on a couch which he shared with Finnish Foreign Minister Mattila. Above them was a large Finnish winter scene by Axel Gallen, one of the nation's leading artist. The President had arrived promptly at 7:30 and departed at 7:57. He was followed into the Palace by Yugoslav President Tito who, in turn, would be succeeded by Soviet General Secretary Brezhnev.

Nessen said later that the President had a sauna in the Embassy Residence.

Bill Ringle, Gannett