

POOL REPORT

NOVEMBER 14, 1975

Meeting With Student Group at North Carolina Central University and Motorcade to Airport

President went into a small room off the gym, cinder block, painted pale blue with 13 folding chairs. 12 student leaders -- 4 girls and 8 fellows. They asked him questions for about 20 minutes.

First question concerned their concern that the cutback in the budget would mean less money for education. President said it should be understood that it would not be a cut in spending but rather a cut in the growth of federal spending, with no changes.

\$50 billion would be added to the budget. He is trying to reduce the growth. "I am now in the process of spending about 2 hours a day on the budget."

Some departments will get what they have and some will have reductions in the amount of money they have to spend. "Few, if any, will get any additional money." President said he had not gotten to HEW. Expects to get to it next week. He said "the likelihood is that it will not be cut back.

Asked about student loan programs. We will try to see if a consolidation of student help programs might be a better way to handle it.

After about five minutes of questions, he posed for pictures with a few of the students and then said "we have some more time for questions."

One of the girls asked him if he would name qualified women to any significant posts. He cited Carla Hills as Secretary of HUD and Betty Murphy at NLRB. "My wife has suggested that I consider a woman for the Supreme Court." He was asked if Mrs. Ford had any influence on his decisions. "She has considerable", he said.

He was asked about appointing minorities to Cabinet level positions. He cited Coleman at DOT. He said: "I would not anticipate any changes in the Cabinet. From time to time when we have openings, minorities will be considered.

He was asked what he will do to help graduates find jobs in June. He said the best way to help is to have healthy economy, creating more jobs. He referred to many unemployed today. Conceded that there is "too many unemployed. A healthy economy is the best solution for those graduating next June."

He was asked if he would consider a black for Vice President. "Certainly, Ed Brooke ought to be considered." He cited Brooke's service in the United States Senate, and his record as Attorney General of Massachusetts. He has an enviable record of public service." He said that he likes him personally.

Asked about women in athletics, he cited a bill he signed which included Title 9 program. He said program should be given one or two years to see how it works out. If it is fully implemented, a number of colleges have complained they would be forced to drop a number of minor sports.

Pressed on his personal opinion, President said he still reads the sports pages first. He would rather see a pretty face on the sports page than a hulky football player.

(MORE)

He was asked what blacks can expect from his administration if he is elected next year. President cited his appointment of Lowell Perry as head of EEOC. "He (Perry) understands the problems of the blacks and he will do a good job."

President repeated his statement "inflation hurts people whether they are employed or unemployed. What about education? Equality of education has made a lot of headway in his Administration, he said.

Was asked about position on busing? He said "I happen to believe that the approach of courts in some cases to achieving quality education by court ordered busing is not the best way. That remedy had such a harmful effect in other ways, there must be a better way." He cited a bill which recommends other ways to achieve quality education other than busing and said he felt they should be tried. "It really tears up the fabrics of relationship between people, but if the court says that that is the law, it will be carried out by this Administration."

A young man said that this Administration was not particularly popular with minorities. He said that most people didn't understand that the President's plea for a \$28 billion reduction in expenditures was not actually a cut in spending. He wondered what the President was doing to improve his status with minorities. The President said it was something that the White House works on constantly. "I concede that what you say is true" about the Administration's image among minorities, Ford said. The questioner interrupted him to ask if he could not plan some public relations campaign to turn that image around. "I would rather do it by substantive means rather than have a big PR program," the President said. "I would rather solve problems than give people a snow job by some Madison Avenue firm." Howard Norton of U. S. News was standing close to Bob Hartmann at the time and heard Hartmann say under his breath "there goes Madison Avenue."

In discussing his election prospects, the President said "I am convinced that between now and the election you will find substantive answers to problems that will enable people to say 'we took on a tough job, we didn't lose our cool and things are a lot better.'"

The President's motorcade travelled for about 50 yards from a back door to the gym to the main street when the President got out of his car and shook hands. He walked about 50 yards down the curb shaking hands, with the people who were gathered there 5 to 8 deep. There was a lot of screaming and shouting and it was a very warm reception. Several shouted I am going to vote for you as the President walked past. Most of the crowd was black. Governor Holshouser, who rode to the hotel with Ford apparently stayed in the car as Ford was shaking hands, at least he wasn't with the President.

Uneventful 30 minute ride to the motel at 55 m. p. h.

Aldo Beckman, Chicago Tribune

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