

November 29, 1975

POOL REPORTS 2 AND 3THE PRESIDENT'S VISIT TO PUMP STATION #8 (Fairbanks, Alaska)

After the speeches were over, Ford, Kissinger and Zarb went into a room off the Main Hangar and changed into grey Air Force parkas and green boots. Kissinger had a terrible time getting his boots on. He finally had to have an airman help him get his boots on. He couldn't lean all the way over to get down to his boots, and an airman finally had to help him out.

They were out of the hangar at 4:30 Washington time, which is 11:30 here. It is approximately ten or 12 miles Southeast of here to the pump station. They made two stops on the way, the first at a place where cranes were lifting the pipe itself, connecting the pipes. They had the pipes suspended in the air, and the President stopped and chatted with some workmen, including Roy Vandiver, who made a big show of saying, "Mr. President, we want to shake your hand. We got a pretty good pipe here. We want to show you. We want you to see it." Ford said, "Sounds like you are from Texas." Vandiver said afterwards he was from Tennessee, and he said "everybody calls me 'Hamburger.'" That is Vandiver.

That is about four miles from the hangar, and then four miles beyond that there was a -- what was it, a welding site -- they weren't welding, but it was a welding demonstration. There was a welding boot at the site where the workmen who have been working, but there wasn't anyone working. Frank Moolin, who was the senior project officer, explained to the President how the pipe was constructed, and if you want some of that stuff, I have it, but I think there is a poopsheet here with a lot of it. I won't bore you with it.

At this welding site, Kissinger remarked that Jim Lynn isn't considered important enough to be given a hard hat. They don't mind losing him. Jim Naughton told Kissinger, "Better watch out. He will cut your travel budget off." Kissinger said, "He has cut off everything already. He has cut out ten countries." Then they got into the cars and went to the pumping station, which is under construction. It is a number of green corrugated steel buildings, and I believe three large storage tanks, oil storage tanks, and a bubble building that houses a working area, including welding.

You go into the thing, and there is a little holding room, the doors of which get shut, and then the inner doors rise so the building doesn't lose air pressure and collapse. Ford went in and watched the demonstration there, and then went out the other end to the mess hall, where he sat with workers and the president of Alyeska, whose name is Ed Patton. The President had an apple turnover and a cherry turnover. He spent about 15 to 20 minutes there and then came back. I heard very little in the way of the President talking to one or another of his briefers. I did overhear a man named John Branch, the project manager for the pumping station, explain to the President about the soil, which I can go into for anybody that is interested. Come see me later. That is the only conversation I heard the President involved in. Then they returned to the hangar, shook hands and Air Force One moved out of the hangar at 1:45.

-- Mort Kondracke and Tom DeFrank