

December 25, 1975

POOL REPORT -- CHRISTMAS AFTERNOON

While awaiting Ford's descent from the ~~ski~~ mountain, the pool heard Ron Nessen announce a late addition to ~~Ford~~ the President's Christmas day blessings. Nessen said a Gallup poll, to be released over the weekend, would show that Ford's job performance rating (favorable/unfavorable) has jumped by five points since the last rating period, presumably from 44 percent approval to 49.

Without giving ~~any~~ specifics, Nessen also said that Ford was not planning on doing ^{extensive} much political campaigning for the ~~R~~ Republican primaries but would likely "stay in the White House and be President." He said he expected Ford would visit New Hampshire and Florida ~~in~~ "one time each" in advance of those primaries. He added, however, that he expected Ford to "continue to go out of town to make Presidential speeches." Asked how ~~any~~ listeners would be able to tell the difference between political and presidential ^{addresses,} talks, Nessen replied, "I'll tell you."

Nessen also cautioned reporters that they "shouldn't believe the common wisdom that the Ford campaign is poorly organized." He cited reporting by the Washington Post's David Broder, who "went up to New Hampshire and found the Ford campaign highly ~~organized~~ organized," but by contrast found "no trace of the Reagan campaign," according to Nessen's reading.

Copies of the Ford family gift list, prepared by Shiela Weidenfeld, were distributed just before noon.

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President Ford completed his three-hour ski expedition at 1:24 p.m., sliding ruddy-faced and winded to a graceful stop above Gondola one with almost no tourist-spectators on hand to greet him. He said he was tired but repeated again that he "felt great" and said he was looking forward to attacking a 22-pound Christmas turkey. Asked if he considered giving up skiing, Ford replied, "Why? I ski better now than when I was a good many years younger. X I'm better now than I was last year."

At the entrance to the Bass house, Ford paused briefly to publicize the donation of replicas of Teddy Roosevelt's skis to the Vail Ski Museum. ~~ex~~ The original nine-foot hickory all-purpose skis, used by Roosevelt in Western skiing during the 1880s, are in the Smithsonian. The ash replicas were donated by Ski magazine and contributing editor Morten Lund through Ford to Robert W. Parker, Vail Associates executive who is chairman of the Vail Bicentennial committee. Ford told Parker "I'd be delighted to donate a pair" of his own skis to the museum, but opined that "they won't be as historic as these" Roosevelt replicas. Ford also told Lund, "I enjoy reading Ski magazine." (Copies of a press kit celebrating this presentation are available in the press room.)

Dave Beckwith-Time
Bob Pierpoint-CBS