

March 5, 1976

FOCL REPORT #3GOP Reception, Forum 30 Hotel (Springfield Businessmen)

Shortly after the session with the farmers, the President went into a private reception on the 20th floor, where 23 Springfield businessmen who helped to raise money for his campaign were waiting for him. Heading the group was Francis J. Budinger, a retired insurance executive from Springfield who told the President, "We're raising money for you". The President shook every hand in the room and when he got to Butz, the Secretary told him, "You were great, Mr. President; you were particularly great in that part about Secretary Butz".

In brief remarks to the businessmen, the President said he is "absolutely convinced" that he has the momentum going for him. He reviewed the New Hampshire and Massachusetts victories and said he is confident that "the momentum has turned it around in Florida". He talked about how his 46 vetoes have saved \$13 billion and said that savings could have had an impact as far as crowding out in the capital market. He mentioned today's unemployment figures and said they "prove that last month's figures were not a fluke, but were real". He said it was interesting to note that "we have regained every lost job from the depths of the recession". He said that internationally America is dealing from strength. "And regardless of what anyone says, we are second to none," he said.

He was there about 20 minutes, spending considerable time with Mr. Budinger to thank him for his work. The other businessmen told Ford that Budinger was a tough taskmaster in his efforts to raise money for the Ford campaign. He left there and was headed for the general reception elsewhere in the hotel.

#

Chicago Tribune-Aldo Beckman