

March 6, 1975

POOL REPORT #11

Travel pool from Centennial High School to Lyle Grace Farm, tour of Lyle Grace Farm, Luncheon, travel pool from Grace Farm to Redwood Inn, Chanute Community Foundation Reception, travel pool from Redwood Inn to Champaign PFC Headquarters, PFC Reception, and travel pool to University of Illinois Willard Airport

Leaving the Centennial High School, Ford again stood up to wave at a large crowd gathered in front of the school. There was one negative sign-- "Ford vetoed our jobs. Veto Ford." He sat down for much of the ride along Interstate 57 to the Grace farm located near Leverett, Illinois.

The Grace farm consisted of five buildings--two large gray barns, a large white house, and a garage and storage shed.

The President and party were greeted by Mr. Grace and escorted through some of the buildings. The President climbed into the cab of a \$24,500 air-conditioned tractor, one of five parked on Mr. Grace's land. The President sat inside and worked at the wheel.

With reporters looking on, Earl Butz gave a lecture on free enterprise farming and observed that the black dirt in these parts runs "halfway down to China." The Graces' have 800 acres, growing corn, soybeans, and wheat. No sheep or small brown gifts. Worth of the farm is \$2.3 million, but Mr. Grace still said that Ford's proposed \$150,000 estate exemption is "going to be great." Both Mr. and Mrs. Grace plan to vote for Ford.

Inside the house, there was a buffet set on the table which included rye bread, cheese, both Swiss and American, ham and roast beef, deviled eggs, carrots, celery, radishes, and baked beans. The President said to Mrs. Grace, "I'll tell you, I've always liked homemade beans and bread. Yes, the kind you can smell all over the house and sometimes before you even go in the house." "But, the President, "and angel food cake too." There appeared to be family members along with the White House and Congressional delegation. The pool then left the house. After about 25 minutes, Mr. Ford emerged, thanked his hosts, received a jar of some kind of preserves from Mrs. Grace and left for the motorcade to Rantoul. There was a good turnout along the motorcade route between Chanute AFB and the downtown area. At the Redwood Inn, the President was interviewed briefly by newsmen from the local radio station and was asked much the same questions--defense spending, the grain embargo, etc.--no new news. However, twice the President referred to Rantoul as Rantoun.

His speech was the standard economic fair, plus an appeal for help in getting the Defense Budget through Congress. The Air Force is already in trouble over the R. O. T. C. Apparently plans to close down Chanute. Ford said that he would have Don Rumsfeld come down to visit, but didn't commit himself on the results. The President had another interview on the way out of the Redwood Inn with the "on the air" radio station, presumably pronouncing Rantoul correctly. The motorcade to Urbana was again lined off and on with friendly people, and the President arose in his limousine at appropriate times.

The Champaign PFC headquarters is a modern building where the President waved to a gathered crowd and told volunteer workers inside, mostly college age, to send their autograph requests to Washington so that there would be more time for him to shake hands. Leaving the headquarters, he predicted victories in Florida and Illinois. He worked crowds along University Ave. and greeted the visiting University of Michigan Swim Team after it persistently shouted "Go Blue". Learning that the Team was placing third in a Big Ten Meet, Ford encouraged them to win. Motorcade to the airport from there was without incident. (Kondrake-Chicago Sun Times; Cochran-NBC).

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