

5/13/76

TRAVEL REPORT to Small Business

The most remarkable part of the short trip up to the new Hyatt Regency was a quick drop-in the President made in a retailers' luncheon which seemed to be hosted by or honoring Commerce Secy Eliot Richardson. President Ford got to the microphone....gave a quick pre-view of his regulatory reform speech...then generously complimented the work of Eliot Richardson, His "oustanding Secy of the Dept of Defense." Could not see Richardson's face thru the crowd...President indicated later he didn't realize what he'd said.

The only backroom stories out of this pool, WH-wigs, are from the little receiving line the President worked after his big speech. He met each state SBA champion (don't know what they won for)...and ~~the following~~ ~~he~~ picked up a pocket-full of goodies: a t-shirt reading "Thumbs up" from the Florida man, a belt buckle, a money clip (no dough), and ~~and~~ ~~the following~~ words of comfort from the Michigan winner; James P. Delpa of Benton Harbor: "I've seen you on tv. You'll do fine." And a quiet whisper from Republican supporter Ralph Petersen of Dewitt Nebraska: "I know it will work out." The President said thanks.

Back at W.H. almost on schedule, and without incident.

*a.*  
-Compton  
ABC News