

FOOL REPORT

AIR FORCE ONE--ANN ARBOR/VAIL

DECEMBER 19, 1976

Motorcade to Willow Run airport uneventful. President shook a few hands of officials and cops. Just before he boarded the ramp he turned to Betty in mock dismay and remarked, "I have to show some deference now--Dr. Ford." Wheels wup at 2:05 p.m. nothing to report enroute; ontime arrival in Grand Junction to a closed arrival at 3:20 p.m. local. The four huey choppers in the Ford party arrived at the Avon farm of Bill Nottingham after a sixty-four minute flight. The Fords engaged in small talk with the Nottinghams for about five minutes; we heard the President say, "we made a decision to come so here we are," an apparent reference to the lack of snow. Then the Fords got into a blue Buick electra at 4:30 for the twenty-minute motorcade to Vail Village.

The Fords got out of their car at the edge of The Lodge at Vail and shook hands with several Vail hosts. Then the Fords walked down the street which runs past the lodge's shops to the international children's plaza in the center of town where a crowd of 1,500 to 2,000 had gathered (Nessen put the figure at a quarter of a million) for the christmas tree ceremony. Somebody remarked about the lack of snow and Jack Ford told poolers, "the bars are gonna do a helluva lot of business."

Vail mayor, John Lobson, introduced the President, who spoke for about three minutes. The transcript will be available but Ford said some aides had suggested he go somewhere else and play golf because of the snow situation. Someone in the crowd yelled "boo" and Ford cracked, "that's what I said." A bit later Ford promised, "between the Indians and myself we knew very well there would be some snow very shortly." Jack Ford joked, "he just can't get away from those campaign promises," (an aside to the pool). Then the President flipped a switch and the lights on a 30-foot blue spruce tree came to life amidst much oohing and aahing. The Fords then walked about a block to a point near the gondola number one lifts, working the crowd all the way. Somebody yelled he'd voted for Ford and the President replied, "we appreciate it, we needed a few more." Then he got in the car for the very short ride to the Bass residence.

ADDENDUM: Fords plan family dinner at home around 9:00 p.m. Possibility they might invite the Ted Kindels, and Pepi Gramshammers to join.

President plans to ski shortly after 10:00 a.m. Monday. Pool will be posted Sunday evening.

Posting in Press Room 10:00 a.m. Monday.

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