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HOLLAND RADIO INTERVIEW - September 9, 1948
Radio Station WHTC.

Announcer - We now take you to the Warm Friend Tavern etc. etc.

Ford - ^{Thank you Mr} ~~This is Jerry Ford, Jr. speaking.~~ ^{Ladies + Gentlemen} We are gathered here tonight for the purpose of discussing some of the issues of the campaign in the Fifth District Congressional race in the Republican Primary. I am one of the candidates and I wish to give the voters of this community a clear idea of what I stand for. I want to make the issues plain and discuss them freely. I regret that my opponent, Mr. Jonkman, did not meet me in public debates so that we could discuss the issues before the people in a democratic manner. However, you have a right to know what I stand for. You are the citizens I hope to serve and I would not presume to ask for your support unless you knew my opinion on certain fundamental questions.

Allen - ^{In the name of the} ~~I am a representative~~ citizen of this community and I would like to begin the discussion by asking you what is the most important issue of this campaign? Why did you decide to run for Congress and why should we change representatives?

Ford - ^{Ken} Mr. Allen, I'm glad you asked me those questions. They are to the point and should be answered.

I made my decision to run for this office over a year ago. I had returned from four years duty with the Navy. I had resumed my civilian status and settled down to work when it gradually appeared to me that our representative in Washington from this district was not truly reflecting the opinions of his constituents.

Allen - In what way?

Ford - Well, one of the first things that struck me was this. The United States had just finished fighting one of the most devastating wars of all time. We had barely finished the job of winning an all-out war and had committed ourselves to trying to establish some semblance of order in war torn nations when the present congressman from our district began to show himself unwilling to go



along with the sound bi-partisan plans of our national leaders for the economic rehabilitation of Europe.

Allen - You mean the European Recovery Program and other legislation for the reconstruction of destitute countries?

Ford - Yes, precisely.

Allen - In what way was our congressman failing to "go along", as you put it?

Ford - It all began with the question of the amount of aid that was to be given Europe. From the end of the war until very recently he balked at the recommended appropriations and persistently tried to whittle them down to ineffective levels. Frankly, I was very surprised that anyone from our own district would take such an attitude.

Allen - You mean that folks from this district are in favor of aid to Europe?

Ford - Absolutely, and speaking of aid, I would venture to say that the records will show that no other section of the United States has contributed more generously by private gifts to relatives and friends over-seas.

Allen - It's true many citizens in this area have close ties with friends and relatives in Europe but do you think the European Recovery Program will help the ordinary citizen in those countries?

Ford - Naturally, that is the aim of the program. It must give the common man of Europe a real basis for faith in free government. The program is not designed to make the rich richer and the poor poorer.

Allen - Do you think that we will get our dollars worth out of aid to Europe?

Ford - I most certainly do. Our administrative officials must be alert and efficient and must tightly supervise the distribution of materials and funds so that the people of Europe can get back on their feet. A healthy Europe is vitally important to our own welfare.

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Allen - I have heard the criticism that while the United States is spending vast sums overseas we are neglecting many of our own citizens who are in need. In this a valid argument against aid to our former allies?

Ford - The criticism is just ^{to some extent} True, we must spend money in Europe ^{to} and ^{and} try to dry up the communist influence that threatens our freedom. It is both protective and constructive and we cannot afford not to do so. However, in our enthusiasm we must not neglect our deserving citizens at home.

Allen - Speaking of the needs of our own people, what do you think of the present social security set-up?

Ford - The present social security program should be improved by broadening the coverage where practical from an administrative ^{cost} point of view and the payments should be put on a more realistic level. ~~That is what I was referring to.~~ We are neglecting to provide adequate payments to the people who are dependent on social security for a livelihood. The money has been paid in and there ^{could be funds available} ~~are many millions of surplus~~ to increase the payments without adding to the present 1% deductions. The man who received \$47.50 a month six years ago and who receives the same amount today is actually receiving about 60% of his former purchasing power. There should be an immediate adjustment in this situation to bring payments up to a fair level. Further, the money collected from the working man and the employer should be ear-marked and used for the purpose for which it was collected. ^{This is sound insurance practice.} The money belongs to the people and they should have a fair return. ^{This is sound insurance practice.}

Allen - To change the subject, I would like to ask a question on national defense. What do you think should be done to strengthen our armed forces?

Ford - We now have the peace time draft. We should not be satisfied with teaching our young men nothing but military techniques. From my own experience of 4 years in the Navy in World War II, I know that in peace time a young man can be taught a civilian



trade and educated to be a productive citizen when his period of military service ends. The educational phase can best be handled by competent civilian instructors and I favor a program that will place this kind of training in the hands of non-military personnel.

I would like to add at this point, while speaking on the question of national defense, that we must do everything possible to keep our country out front in scientific research and development. It is useless to train men unless we can give them the finest fighting equipment.

Allen - When we started you mentioned "other reasons" why you decided to run for Congress. What are some of these?

Ford - Well, take the subject of local improvements. I feel that more should be done for our locality than has been done in the past. We must remember that the federal government won't step in and do things for us unless someone is aggressively pushing our needs to the front, and that is the job of our representative. For example, the Grand Haven harbor project languished needlessly when the necessity for expansion was obvious. An eight year delay was finally ended but only with outside help. The Holland harbor, which must be enlarged and improved if this community is to go forward economically, has not ^{tell} been given proper attention.

Allen - Can you give any other examples in the field of local improvements?

Ford - Yes, I certainly can, and the residents along the Grand River in both Kent and Ottawa counties are wrought up because they feel the entire Grand River Valley should have been included in the flood survey and not just the area around Lansing. As you know, in 1947 and again in 1948 the Grand River went on a rampage destroying thousands of dollars worth of property from the head waters to its mouth. During the last regular session of Congress an appropriation was made to survey the river for flood control in a limited area. The damage in Kent and Ottawa counties was equal to if not greater than that in Lansing, but we weren't



included and I feel the blame for this slip-up can be laid directly to my opponent's lack of vigor, ^{and a failure to appreciate our needs.} In the special session he promised to have the appropriation increased so that the lower Grand River areas would be included but the incumbent came back empty handed and as far as we are concerned the survey is unnecessarily delayed for another year.

Allen - Didn't I read that you had attended a meeting where the question of soil erosion and lake front property damage was the subject?

Ford - Yes, and I think it was unfortunate that the State of Michigan had no official representative present. We all know that the recent high water in the Great Lakes has caused great damage to farm land and to other property. This is just one part of the huge losses this entire nation is sustaining because we aren't keeping up with nature. Soil erosion and the loss of productive land ~~for other reasons~~ must be checked. The conservation of our natural resources should be a number one item on the agenda for the next Congress.

The 78th, the 79th and 80th Congresses have voted repeatedly vast sums of money for reclamation and irrigation projects which have created great new resort areas in the west. I have no complaint against these worthy projects that benefit our nation as a whole, but if I'm elected to Congress I will not sit idly by and permit our local harbors and tourist facilities *to* be neglected.

Allen:- I understand that your opponent has made the statement that there are no issues in this campaign. What do you think of this assertion?

Ford - If there were no issues I can assure you I wouldn't be in the race. If I felt this district was being truly represented in Washington, I would say, let well enough alone.

Perhaps we should mention the age of the candidates. Mr. Johnson is over 64 years old. 2 am 35.
There are issues, dozens of them. I wish there was time for us to examine ^{other} each question. We have covered some of the most



important problems facing us. You now know where I stand on national defense, foreign aid, social security, local improvements and conservation. These are only a few of the issues but they touch each and every one of us.

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If elected to Congress I promise to make every effort to represent you to the best of my ability. The worker, the businessman, the farmer, and the public at large have their rights as citizens of the United States and each has a stake in this election on Tuesday, September 14. No individual, no group, nor any combination of groups should be permitted to dominate the other. I will earnestly strive for constructive legislation that will be for the benefit of this area and the nation as a whole. It is your decision, be sure to get out and vote September 14th.

