

President Gerald R. Ford's handwritten reflections, 1977 or 1978

Scanned from the collection **Gerald R. Ford: Materials from the writing of *A Time To Heal*** at the Gerald R. Ford Presidential Library

While writing his autobiography, *A Time to Heal* (New York: Harper & Row, 1979), President Gerald R. Ford composed a series of personal reflections on twenty-seven topics. What makes these documents so unusual is not only their introspection but also their form. President Ford recorded these observations by hand, writing in blue ball point on his favored yellow writing tablets. He did not expend time and energy to polish and edit his writing, apparently planning to do so when incorporating them into the book. Therefore occasional spelling or grammatical errors or incomplete thoughts appear.

For each reflection the Gerald R. Ford Presidential Library has scanned President Ford's handwritten document and added a Library-produced transcription below to aid in reading the reflection.

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The unelected representatives on Capitol Hill

Since about 1960 an immensely powerful group of men & women have been rapidly ~~growing~~ ^{increasing} in ~~power~~ ^{numbers} & influence on Capitol Hill. Most of these new breed are very bright, well educated and hard working. They work for members of the House & Senate, either in the offices of the legislators or on the committee staffs. Because of their specific expertise they have a tremendous impact on the thinking & decision making of their respective bosses.

In 1949 as a freshman member of the House of Rep. I was allowed a staff of 3 with a salary allowance of _____. Today a House member is allowed 15 with a salary allowance of _____. In the 1950's committees were limited in number, usually under the control of the chairman with some courtesy to the minority ranking member. Today on both the House & Senate side there has been a proliferation of sub-committees & now ^{about without exception} each sub-committee chairman & minority ranking member have one or more staff assistants. As a consequence the number of committee staff employees has grown like topsy. The rate of growth is far greater than the growth in GNP & far exceeds the growth in employees working in the executive branch.

There has been a remarkable increase in the number of staff members for U.S. Senators.

This group prepares memos ^{for their bosses} on important issues and consequently directly affect the decisions made by the elected representatives. More often than not these individuals do not come from the constituency of their bosses & therefore do not

represent the views of the voters back home.

Because the Congress has been in control of one political party 28 out of the last 30 years since 1949 there has been very little turnover in staff personnel or at least in staff ideology.

The net result is that many of the crucial decisions made in the legislative branch are in effect made by unselected individuals who are unaccountable to voter control. This is certainly not the contemplation of the framers of the Constitution.

Admittedly the domestic & foreign policies of the U.S. are more complicated now than in 1949. Certainly the Congress should be adequately staffed to challenge witnesses from the executive branch & experts from outside. Yes, each Senator & House member has more constituents than 30 years ago.

But, the public must realize, for their own good, that there is a 4th branch of govt that is making many decisions for them at their expense & without much voter control as long as you have virtually one party control of the legislative branch of the federal government.

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In 1949 as a freshman member of the House of Rep., I was allowed a staff of 3 with a salary allowance of _____. Today a House member is allowed 15 with a salary allowance of _____. [written in margin: "There has been a similar burgeoning of staff members for U.S. Senators."] In the 1950's committee were limited in number, usually under the control of the chairman with some courtesies to the minority ranking member. Today on both the House & Senate side there has been a proliferation of sub-committees & now almost without exception each sub-committee chairman & minority ranking member have one or more staff assistants. As a consequence the number of committee staff employees have grown like topsy. The rate of growth is far greater than the growth in GNP & far exceeds the growth in employees working in the executive branch.

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