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Lincoln Day speech introduction
Flint, Michigan. - March 21, 1955

Thank you, Mr. Chairman,

I am truly pleased to be here this evening, but am at a loss to know why you folks want another Ford in Flint. From what I read in the papers, the Fords and the Chevrolets are battling it out to the bitter end, with a split decision based on different ground rules. Your speaker this evening is not the only member of the Congress whose name by chance is identified with one of America's great industries. According to the Congressional Directory you might have brought in a Frazier from Tennessee. Or if you wanted the heavy weights, there are the two Macks, Peter and Russell from Illinois and Washington. But I'm just a Ford from Grand Rapids. Of course, my city does build some Fisher bodies which, if I remember correctly, help to improve a General Motors product.

The 10,000 employees and the three GM plants may be the reason Grand Rapids has been able to retain its long standing distinction as Michigan's second city. Now I have no intention of entering into a dispute carried on recently by the Flint Journal and the Grand Rapids Press as to which city is the more populous. But the latest official report of the Grand Rapids Chamber of Commerce puts us ahead of you by 14,000 souls. But more startling is the fact that Grand Rapids pumps on the average 9 million gallons of



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water per day more than does your city. That may make us thirstier but not wetter, I hope. Of course I don't know what the Flint folks drink, and pass no judgment on your taste or rate of consumption. Nevertheless we like you just the same.

I was troubled just a bit though to read in Bill Pyper's column recently that the names of neither of our cities were changed by the Communists in the Great Soviet Encyclopedia. While Bay City became Bei-Siti, Grand Rapids was merely hyphenated and Flint remained just plain Flint. I don't know if they were trying to ignore us, or if they just couldn't socialize these two great industrial centers of Michigan.

In either case we are proud of our achievements in the industrial world, of our men of labor, and our men of management. We share this common pride tonight.

