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REMARKS

GERALD R. FORD

GRAND RAPIDS BAR ASSOCIATION

OCTOBER 26, 1966

Mr. Chairman, Mr. Catchick, I am grateful for the opportunity to debate the issues of this important political campaign.

As you know, I am a Republican, Mr. Catchick is a Democrat. I trust, therefore, that he accepts the liberal Johnson-Humphrey philosophy. I disagree with much of this philosophy and feel strongly that there is a better approach to solving our national and international problems.

The question to be answered by each voter on November 8th is which candidate for Congress will best represent his views in the national legislature.

We have every right to assume that my opponent supports the present Administration and agrees with what has happened to America in the past 24 months. Let's look at that record.

Today under Mr. Johnson's Administration we have the highest cost of living in the history of the United States. The highest interest rates in 45 years. The tightest money market in many years.

We have a monumental crisis in crime instead of domestic safety and security.

Internationally we are involved in a serious conflict in Southeast Asia and there is no evidence that our government has been able to obtain much support from our friends and allies.

Under this Administration we have had reckless federal spending on non-essential and deferrable domestic programs. I would prefer a prudent and frugal use of taxpayer dollars.

There were two federal tax increases in 1966 and there is every reason to believe that the President will demand another tax increase soon after the election. My opponent's party has run the nation's business since 1961. The high prices, high interest rates, and high taxes are the responsibility of the President and his lop-sided Democratic majorities in the Congress.

Inflation is not caused by the working man who seeks more pay, nor by the businessman who charges higher prices, nor by the farmer who seeks a fair return for his efforts, nor by the housewife who does the purchasing for the family. High prices, or if you will - the deflation of the dollar, are caused primarily by excessive spending of the federal government, by consistent deficit financing, by throwing away the taxpayer's money.

-MORE-



Republicans in the House, outnumbered 2-to-1, sought to reduce federal spending on 5 non-military appropriation bills. We could have saved 5.6 billion dollars, dampening the fires of inflation and avoiding more tax increases. But 80% of the Democratic members, including all those from Michigan, voted for more spending. Better than 90% of the Republicans, including all those from Michigan, voted for the taxpayers and for the consumer.

As Republicans we submitted constructive alternatives to the war on poverty; but numbers overwhelmed us. We would use and improve the facilities of existing agencies, many of them state and local, to get at the roots of poverty. We suggested the Human Investment Act which would encourage business and labor to employ and train people with limited skills and education. They would be encouraged by a 7% tax credit.

We recommended a system of tax credits and a return of federal funds to the states for their use in promoting an educational system under state control.

In the area of foreign policy I want to comment only Mr. Johnson's insistence that the United States increase its trade with and assist Communist-dominated nations. In the Food for Peace program we made every effort to halt subsidized bargain sales of our farm products to nations which trade with North Vietnam and Cuba. We were right, but the Administration expressed a deep concern for any such restriction and the legislation was finally modified. President Johnson has approved the use of tax funds to guarantee credit to additional Communist nations -- Poland, Bulgaria, Hungary, Czechoslovakia. The House of Representatives objected to this use of the taxpayer's funds. But in the final analysis the Democratic-dominated Congress gave the President practically what he wanted.

We need an independent-minded Congress which will represent the people rather than the President. I know the voters of the Fifth District want that kind of representation.

The issue in this election in the 5th District is simply this: Do you want someone who will challenge the policies of the Johnson Administration at home and abroad, someone who can effectively represent you and your District, or do you want a congressman who is committed to follow blindly the demands of the White House.

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