

AUGUST 9, 1974

POOL REPORT
OF THE SWEARING-IN CEREMONY
OF THE PRESIDENT

I won't try to go through the speech, which I am sure all of you heard and they will have texts on shortly. Most of what we have to give you is names of people there. There may be a list later, but some may be in a rush for it.

The first people we saw come in were Melvin Laird and his wife, and John Byrnes, the former ranking minority Member on the Ways and Means Committee and a friend of the President.

General Haig came in. Rose Mary Woods; Congressman Sam Devine of Ohio; Peter Rodino, the Chairman of the House Judiciary Committee; John Scali. We saw some of the President's staff, Milton Friedman, a speech writer; Leslie Arends, the Republican whip in the House; Bob Griffin, the assistant minority leader in the Senate; Senator McClellan; Senator Young of North Dakota; Representative Barber Conable; Harley Staggers, Chairman of the Interstate and Foreign Commerce Committee in the House; Al Quie from the House.

Then came Speaker John McCormick, the former Speaker of the House; George Mahon, the Chairman of the Appropriations Committee; Herbert Stein; Attorney General Saxbe; Secretary of State Kissinger; Max Fisher from Detroit, a fund-raiser for various philanthropic causes and also, I believe, for the President.

Kissinger chatted with Saxbe and with Scali. Then, we got Kissinger's attention and asked him if the letter of resignation had been delivered to him and he said that it had been delivered at 11:35 and we asked if it specified the time of President Nixon's resignation, and he said it "didn't specify the time." I will leave that to your assorted constitutional scholars or the ones you call as to whether that means that Ford became President at 11:35 or not. The letter was typed. He said it would be released.

Going back to the people we saw coming in, Senator Marlow Cook; Secretary of Agriculture Earl Butz; Rogers Morton; William Simon, former Congressman Richard Poff, of Virginia; Bryce Harlow; George Bush; Bill Timmons; Senator Tower; the retired parliamentarian of the House, Lewis Deschler; Congressman James O'Hara, Michigan Democrat; Dean Burch; James Lynn, Secretary of Housing and Urban Development; Senator Mansfield; Carl Perkins of Kentucky, the Chairman of the House Education and Labor Committee; Arthur Burns, the Federal Reserve Board.

MORE



Secretary Weinberger; Brent Scowcroft, Roy Ash, Murray Widenbound, former official whose title I have forgotten for the moment. Speaker Albert; Senator Hugh Scott; Senator Hart of Michigan; Representative Dingell; Secretary of Defense Schlesinger; John McFall, the Democratic whip; Richard Bolling, the Democrat from Missouri; Senator Robert Byrd.

At noon, as you probably heard, a voice announced, "Ladies and gentlemen, the Chief Justice of the United States."

Q Do you know who the voice was?

MR. CLYMER: No. It took him about a minute to walk in. Mr. Ford was introduced, "Ladies and gentlemen, the Vice President of the United States," and Ford came in. Ford's hand was up to take the oath before the Chief Justice told him to raise it. There was a constant clicking of shutters in the room, particularly at the beginning, but it may not have been audible on the TV mikes, but it was very audible in the room.

We spotted John Anderson of Illinois. After he took the oath, the Chief Justice said, "Congratulations, Mr. President." They shook hands, Ford kissed his wife. Mrs. Ford put the Bible under her arm and she sat down and put it in her lap. Ford smiled rather broadly before he started his speech.

There were standees in the center aisle of the East Room. The East Room was set up more or less as it is for a press conference, but it was quite crowded. There were standees in back and also fairly solidly in the center aisle. I couldn't see at this point, but that may have been what caused the brief delay after the announcement of the Chief Justice and the time he got in. It may have been the crowd there.

Ford was turning pages, regular letter-sized pages, I think, 8-1/2 by 11, and after he finished, the Chief Justice picked up his text and handed it to an aide, Air Force aide. At the point when he said that he wanted to meet with the leaders of the House and Senate and asked if they could see him afterwards, Carl Albert nodded. Otherwise, I didn't detect any particular reaction from the people we could recognize to anything in particular that he said.

As he faced the audience, the Cabinet was on his right. His family was in the front row of the sort of center-right section and there were some White House staff people behind them. The left section, as he faced it, was almost entirely Congressional and wives of Members of Congress. As he came out, the Marine Band was playing "God Bless America." Then it played "The Battle Hymn of the Republic. Another person I saw there, I saw Congressman Don Riegle, Michigan Democrat who used to be a Michigan Republican and campaigned very actively against President Nixon in the Republican primaries in 1972. I asked Riegle how long it had been since he had been in the White House and he said, "It has been a very long time."

Adam Clymer - Baltimore Sun

