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PCCL REPCRT

Ford Arrival in Portland

The ride from the airport to downtown was quick and uneventful. There were a few spectators along the route. The crowd became heavier when the motorcade reached downtown.

In the pool car, Nessen talked on several points:

-- The meeting with the cattlemen was delayed about an hour so that the President could rest before starting his evening schedule.

-- After pressing the flesh in Fresno, the President got onto his plane and talked about how a "couple of people squeezed his hand pretty hard" there. Some kids "grabbed his arm and wouldn't let go." He demonstrated with his left arm as he took off his coat in his cabin. Hartmann commented "I guess it's a good thing you were an athlete". The President said that as he was turning away from the crowd at one point a group of young people held onto his left arm and he said, "Ch, no, no, no," not an admonition, but as a reminder that they shouldn't do that. The President once told Nessen that he found that the people in South Carolina "have hands sort of rough." All above according to Nessen.

-- Aboard Air Force One enroute Portland, the President received a cable from Kissinger, a preview of the speech Kissinger proposed to give next week to the World Food Conference in Rome. Said Nessen: Kissinger does not review all speeches with Ford, but this is a "major, important one" and had to be approved. The President and his aides spent some time on the flight going over the speech, proof, said Nessen, that the President is the President wherever he goes.

On arrival in front of the Benson Hotel, the President, accompanied by the local candidates, headed for a crowd of about 1,000 in a block area across from the hotel behind City of Portland Department of Public Works low white barricades.

It was a subdued crowd that appeared to be totally friendly. No signs of demonstrators. He worked the barricades with both hands for ten minutes. He came upon Normita Lim, a young woman who said she works at a nearby branch of the Bank of California and told the pool that her age is her secret. She said she "asked the President if he could be hugged." She said he replied, "yes, but don't do it often." Whereupon, she hugged him, enthusiastically and tightly. He seemed to enjoy it.

From windows overhead some folks yelled "Jerry, hi" and he waved back and said, "Hi".

One man shouted, "Mr. President, have you ever been to Muskegon?" Ford: "I sure have."

One young man asked him, "How would you like to ski in Oregon?" Ford: "I'd love it."

One man said, "I'm a Democrat, but keep plugging." Ford: "We need you," That got a happy laugh from the crowd.

He asked Fred Ritcherson (correct), 24, who wore a green athletic windbreaker, if he plays basketball. Ritcherson, a grad of USC, said no, he runs track. He has only recently moved to Portland from California and likes it here very much.

Then the President went into the hotel lobby. It was crowded, with many people wearing identification badges from the American Folklore Society. He shook hands as he made his way slowly to the elevator at the rear of the lobby to begin his climb to his room for rest.

Sign in the lobby: Ford has better ideas.

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