

[8-4-75]

...to chat with the workers. She was in a
 cheerful mood, her eyes were bright and she was enthusiastic about the
 trip. She sat on a little blue leather foot stool and answered questions
 freely, if at times cryptically.

"I'm ready for the next stop," she said gaily. "I'm feeling
 better. I would say they (such trips) are kind of an endurance contest."

On the subject of Palaces, Mrs. Ford quipped: "Some are better
 than others."

Aren't they like living in mansions, she was asked. "Slightly,"
 she replied. "But they're beautiful... Fascinating."

Speaking of the European trip, she said, "I enjoyed it. I
 particularly enjoyed meeting these people... the heads of state. I had
 read about them."

She thought Romanian Nicolai Ceausescu was just "a gutsy old
 guy," and President Tito whom she had met before "looked amazingly well."

On shopping during the trip, she said: "I stayed within my quota
 and my husband's quota. I picked up some interesting things in the
 market in Helsinki." She said she was recognized and "ran into so many
 Americans."

What are her sentiments on the first anniversary of the Ford
 presidency? "It's been very happy. We've traveled a lot of miles,
 covered a lot of ground. I don't feel any different than when I was the
 wife of the Vice President and Minority leader."

When asked if the ceremonies were taxing, she smiled and said,
 "When the sun is shining in your eyes, it's hard... But I enjoyed the
 playing of the anthems, the opening remarks. I guess I'm just like an
 ordinary tourist. I like to see the different costumes and customs.
 I'm just a tourist at heart. We used to travel a lot."

Does she feel any different as first lady and has the
 president changed? "We're both a year older," she said with her
 eyes twinkling. "I think Jerry's adjusted well. It was a certain
 strain in the beginning. We didn't know what would be expected of us."

She said, however, that she feels that 27 years in public life
 had prepared them and their children for White House living.

Asked how she would mark their first anniversary in the White
 House, she said "Very quietly. It's not exactly the kind of thing I feel
 like celebrating. Maybe we'll have dinner together and commiserate."

"I feel at home in the White House," Mrs. Ford said, adding "as
 much as anyone could. I say that advisedly because it belongs to the
 American people. We're only a page in history. I have a great love
 and appreciation for the White House. It's really a great place."
 She said she would like to be able to identify every object and painting
 in the Mansion.

Does she want her husband to be President. "Of course I ~~would~~
 do." And when pressed, she said "Of course I want him to run, he wouldn't
 be running unless I wanted him to."

"I think Jerry's gotten into his stride. It's like being a
 freshman congressman, you have to get acclimated. It takes a year."

She sees more of him now and feels "he's done amazingly well."

She said "I'll be glad to get home," in response to a question,
 and admitted "a few of us were sleepy. Those were very long toasts in
 foreign languages you don't understand. I think everyone survived the
 trip very well. I had a marvelous time because we visited so many countries."

Asked what she thinks of Secretary Kissinger, Mrs. Ford said "I
 think he's very amusing, has a quick sense of wit, very brilliant, able to
 make light of a serious situation." --end--