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OFFICE OF THE WHITE HOUSE PRESS SECRETARY
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THE WHITE HOUSE

QUESTION AND ANSWER SESSION
WITH THE PRESIDENT
AT THE
WILLIAMSON COUNTY AIRPORT

5:51 P.M. CST

QUESTION: Mr. President, yesterday your son, Jack, said that Senator Percy might be a good candidate for you as a running mate and since he is traveling with you, have you at all discussed that matter?

THE PRESIDENT: We have not discussed it, but I, about a month ago, in listing the vast wealth of potential Republican candidates, included my good friend, Chuck Percy. So, yes, he certainly would be among those to be considered.

QUESTION: Mr. President, good rail transportation is essential to the mine and agricultural needs here in Illinois but good rail transportation is not available. Would you be in support of Federal legislation whereby the Government would purchase the rails, prepare the rails and then in turn lease the rails to the individual companies?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, I just signed, about a month ago, the \$6 billion Rail Revitalization Act which I recommended to the Congress and the Congress passed and under that legislation there will be a significant contribution made to the rail revitalization in this area of the State of Illinois.

We will try to buy better equipment, we will try to rebuild the roads and we will do a lot of things to make the railroads a more vital part of our economy.

QUESTION: President Ford, we have got a problem down here in Southern Illinois. We have got some 5 million blackbirds roosting in an old Christmas tree farm. We are not the only part of Illinois that has got the birds and we are not the only State in the United States that has the birds. Illinois farmers are particularly frustrated about the Government's seeming inability to do anything about it. Should you be elected, would you support legislation next year favoring getting rid of these damn birds once and for all?

MORE

THE PRESIDENT: Well, I was talking to Senator Percy about that problem on the way down here and I am very cognizant of the dangers, both to health and otherwise, but I remind you that about two weeks ago I signed legislation that would give certain authority in the areas of Tennessee and Kentucky for some action to try and eliminate or eradicate that problem in that particular area. My answer to you is, I have already done something in the area where it was very acute and I think that is something we have to face up to and find a better answer because apparently what was tried in that areas was not too successful. So I will work with the Congress in trying to find something so we can eliminate the problem you indicate.

QUESTION: Mr. President, what about the recent misconduct on the part of big corporations such as Lockheed? What does your Administration plan to do to see that that kind of overseas illegal involvement that violates our domestic laws does not happen again?

THE PRESIDENT: As far as this Administration is concerned, we will not tolerate any violation of domestic laws in the United States or the laws of any country in which an American corporation operates. I have put together a top level group in my Administration to study the problem and to make sure that we have all the answers we can possibly get so this bad image of the United States will end, period.

Thank you all very, very much. It is nice to see you.

END (AT 5:55 P.M. CST)