

Mrs. Ford: 'Something You Live With'

WASHINGTON, Sept. 5 (UPI) — "It's something you just have to live with," Betty Ford said today after learning of the assassination attempt on the President in Sacramento, Calif. "I'm very grateful to the Secret Service and the great job they do," she said in comments relayed to reporters by Sheila Rabb Weidenfeld, her press secretary.

Mrs. Weidenfeld said that Richard Keiser, head of the White House Secret Service detail, had telephoned Mrs. Ford to tell her of the episode. Mrs. Weidenfeld said that Mr. Keiser had told Mrs. Ford "what happened" and she was "very grateful" her husband was safe. The secretary said Mrs. Ford did not speak to her husband

immediately after the event. Mrs. Weidenfeld said she did not know how Mrs. Ford felt about the President's travel space or whether she thought that he should cut down the trips for security reasons. "She was just gratified the Secret Service was there," she said.

Meanwhile, the occurrence caused concern on Capital Hill. "It takes only one crackpot to produce chaos," the House Republican leader, John J. Rhodes, of Arizona, said after hearing about it.

Echoes from earlier assassinations restirred Congressional debate about gun control. Representative Robert E. Bauman, Republican of Maryland, said today's hapening did not change his opposition to gun

control. "There is not necessarily a correlation between gun control and the actions of fanatics such as in this incident," he said.

But most initial reaction was very much for gun control. Representative John M. Murphy, Democrat of Staten Island, said "Perhaps the opponents of gun control legislation will soon become tired of losing their nation's most cherished leaders to an assassin's bullet."

Vice President Rockefeller called it "a tragic situation. That's the risk you take if you go into public life." Mr. Rockefeller was in Rochester. His security guard was increased heavily.

Other men who might become President said they were sorry it happened but were glad Gerald Ford was safe.

"I am shocked by the incident but grateful and relieved that the President was unharmed," said Ronald Reagan, the former California Republican Governor.

"This is a terribly disturbing thing and I just thank God that the President was not harmed," said Senator Lloyd M. Bentsen, Democrat of Texas.

Gov. George C. Wallace of Alabama, who was crippled in an assassination attempt in 1972, sent "a personal telegram to the President following his receiving news of today's incident," a spokesman said.

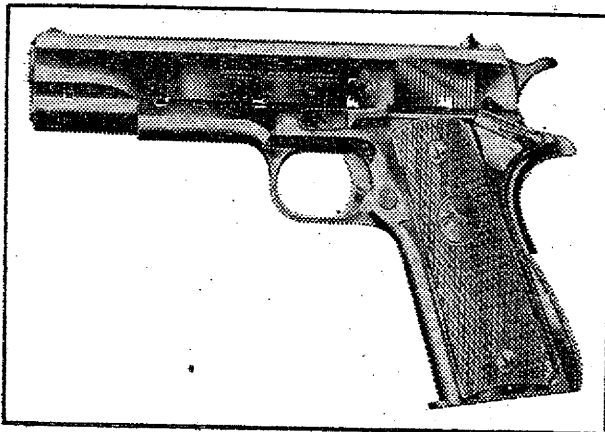
Senator Edward M. Kennedy, Democrat of Massachusetts, whose two brothers were assassinated, said he was enormously relieved that Mr. Ford was unharmed. He said the episode showed there was always the possibility of an act of violence against a public official.

"The President or other public officials should not become possessed by that threat or we can't do anything," Mr. Kennedy told reporters in Seattle.

Senator Strom Thurmond, Republican of South Carolina, said, "It is regrettable that in our free society so much crime is prevalent, making it unsafe for people to pass along the streets." He suggested that Presidents may have to "confine their appearances to bullet-proof enclosures."

Governor Carey of New York suggested using "some of the highly sophisticated methods that have been used for surveillance of people in our country" to help protect the President.

Gun Was .45 Semiautomatic Pistol



A pistol similar to the one seized yesterday

The handgun that Federal authorities said Lynette Alice Fromme pointed at President Ford yesterday was a Colt .45-caliber semi-automatic pistol, according to United States Attorney Dwayne Keyes in Sacramento, Calif.

He said there was no bullet in the firing chamber, but there were four in the magazine, or clip, that fits into the grip.

This type of pistol has been the standard United States military handgun since 1926, and was produced by the millions before and during World War II.

Firing a heavy, relatively slow-moving bullet, it gained a reputation as a devastating weapon at close range.

It is prepared for firing in two ways. In one, the loaded magazine, which holds seven cartridges, is inserted into the grip and then the pistol's slide is pulled back and released forward. This carries a cartridge into the firing chamber and also cocks the pistol, making it ready to fire.

In the other method the slide is locked back by means of a catch, the magazine is inserted and the slide is released, again taking a cartridge into the chamber.

Either way the pistol cannot be fired until the slide is activated, although the hammer can be drawn back and cocked independently of the slide.