



Ford's Surrender

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PRESIDENT FORD'S assertion that he was "100 per cent" victorious over Congress in his battle to limit federal spending is absolutely ludicrous. Why Mr. Ford would make a statement so preposterously untrue is incomprehensible when the facts are so overwhelmingly to the contrary.

Since early October, the President and his men adamantly maintained that no tax cut bill would be signed unless it was accompanied by a "clear commitment," a "clear indication" that Congress would "clearly limit" federal spending in fiscal 1977 to \$395 billion.

As Mr. Ford put it on October 6: "It would be dangerous and irresponsible to adopt one without the other. I will not accept that as an answer for our future."

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TO CUT TAXES without stopping the growth in government spending, the President declared, would result in "budget deficits that will continue to climb, the federal government will continue to borrow too much money from the private sector" and "we will have more inflation and ultimately more unemployment."

Supporting Mr. Ford's position, Treasury Secretary William Simon said "what we have here is a classic debate between freedom and socialism." He vowed that the President would never compromise.

As recently as December 18, President Ford was still unyielding,

declaring that Congress should send him a tax-cut bill that recognizes the "basic truth" that "the only honest way to reduce taxes is to reduce the spending of tax money."

But then President Ford caved in. Mr. Ford's hard-fought battle to limit federal spending became a rout, culminating in the President's unconditional surrender.

What Mr. Ford ended up signing was a tax-cut bill containing a token, meaningless, vague, nonbinding promise to control spending which has all the authority of a note from Carl Albert's mother.

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WHAT THE President accepted was a loosely worded pledge that Congress would try to hold down spending by matching any future tax cuts with comparable reductions.

But even this wording contains a loop-hole enough to drive the Seventh Fleet through. It reads that nothing in the proviso "shall preclude the right of the Congress to pass a budget resolution containing a higher or lower expenditure figure if the Congress concludes that this is warranted by economic conditions or unforeseen circumstances."

In backing down on what he has called the No. 1 domestic issue — the need to control federal spending — the President has added one more example to a growing list which shows that, while he talks a good fight, when the crunch comes, Mr. Ford is, in reality, a man who lacks the courage of his convictions.