

# Jersey City Construction Men Give New President Support

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JERSEY CITY, Aug. 8—The ironworkers were having lunch in the Tube Bar on Journal Square so nobody inside heard President Ford's inaugural address on television.

"When the ironworkers are in here," shouted Jerry Rosen, the manager, "you can't hear anything."

Yet the construction men in hard hats and others in this gritty working man's city across the river from Manhattan seemed ready to offer their support to the new President, as they had once warmly supported his predecessor.

"The guy won the daily double and the trifecta," Mike Bird, an ironworker and tavern owner, said admiringly in Kilbride's Pub. He was speaking of the new President.

"It's like hitting the trifecta and you have the only ticket. I mean, he came from Vice President, from nothing, to this."

"Ford's got enough experience in Washington," said Edward Massie, an ironworker, shortly afterwards in the Tube Bar. "I want the best for him, he deserves the best."

A bearded teacher who would not give his name interjected: "He's presented us with the image of middle-class solidarity."

"Ah, all politicians steal," piped up a short, rotund man in the Tube Bar, identified by other patrons as "Louie the Bookie." He was goodnaturedly shouted down by Ford sympathizers.

At the same time, there was a feeling that that the new President was an unknown quantity.

"I don't know anything about him," said Ray Feldman, a construction steward on the \$80-million PATH terminal project at Journal Square, the center of Jersey City.

"Like when you have a new man on the job," he added "you got to feel him out."

William Mack, who stopped to chat with Martin Dugan, who was selling chances on the

square on a 1974 Cadillac for St. John's Roman Catholic Church, said: "From what I hear from the guys in the tavern, all Ford said was 'We must go forward.' That's all he said."

"He seems to be too easy going," Mr. Dugan added.

Not surprisingly, attention remained focused on Mr. Nixon, who had received substantial local majorities in both Presidential elections despite an overwhelming Democratic edge in registration.

"You got to feel sorry for the guy," said Mr. Bird, the ironworker, voicing a sentiment echoed by other workers, including Dan Trainor, a former ironworker and a man celebrated, in the words of an associate as "the last of the iron-fist guys."

"I feel sorry about the President," he said. "I think he got a raw deal."

Yet the workers were clearly hoping that Mr. Nixon's resignation would bring what some called "a loosening" of the tight money situation that has crippled the construction industry and cost them work.

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