



Wally McNamee—Newsweek

A relaxed first session with the old Nixon Cabinet: 'Come in and see me with your problems'

The Once and Future Ford

As he does most mornings, Jerry Ford woke up at sunrise last Thursday, stepped outdoors in his blue bathrobe to pick up his Washington Post, then cooked breakfast for himself and his son Steve. A little later, laden with papers and briefcase, he headed out of his modest Alexandria, Va., home to get some work done at the Executive Office Building. But there the deceptive ordinariness of the day ended. The newspapers's headline had read NIXON RESIGNS, and Gerald R. Ford was to be sworn in at noon as the 38th President of the United States.*

It was to be a long day. His wife, Betty, joined him at 10 o'clock on the White House lawn to say a final good-by to the Nixon family; they soon returned together to the building they would occupy for at least 896 days. The White House staff had already begun the transition to Ford, stripping the Oval Office of Nixon's bric-a-brac and replacing the photographs of Nixon in the adjacent hallway with some of the incoming President. The change-over was completed in the East Room at noon, when Chief Justice Warren Burger led Ford through the historic oath.

Less than an hour later, the President appeared in the White House press room to introduce his new spokesman and jokingly warn reporters that he was

*The modest way Ford began his Inaugural day echoed Thomas Jefferson's, who walked from his boardinghouse to the Capitol to be sworn in for his first term in 1801, then walked back and joined his fellow boarders for lunch.

thinking about restoring the covered-over swimming pool under their feet. He met with his economic advisers to discuss curbing inflation and, throughout the day, popped into meetings arranged by Secretary of State Henry Kissinger with diplomats from 57 countries. For a relative tyro in foreign affairs, Ford was surprisingly at ease. "I don't go to embassies for dinner," he joked with the Chinese liaison officer, "but that doesn't apply to the liaison office." To the Soviet chargé d'affaires, he marveled over the twelve-year ambassadorship of Anatoly Dobrynin in Washington. "He seems to go on and on," Ford remarked.

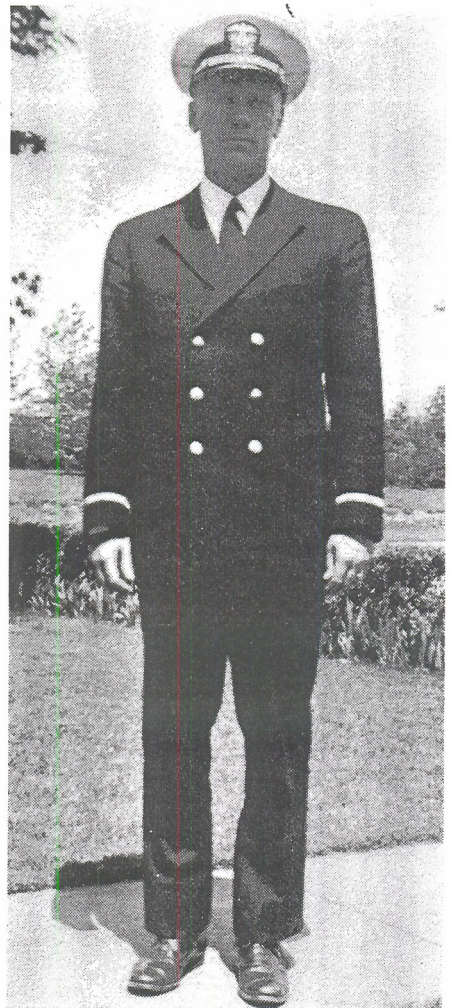
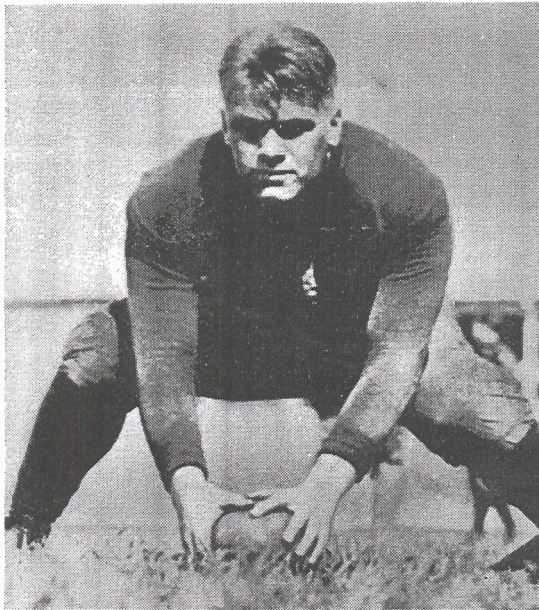
CHAMPAGNE AND COTTAGE CHEESE

The day finally ended back in Alexandria, with a champagne party for a few close friends and a talk with Betty lasting into the early morning. Ford, in blue pajamas, was up again at 6:30 to pick up the newspaper—but the delivery girl was late, and he had to wait for his own headline: FORD BECOMES 38TH PRESIDENT, PROMISES OPENNESS AND CANDOR. His first meeting with the Nixon Cabinet was a relaxed session, the new President coming in and shaking hands all round, urging the officers to "come in and see me with your problems." But by noon, the inevitable isolation of the Presidency was beginning to settle on Ford; he lunched alone—on cottage cheese with ketchup—at the desk in the Oval Office.

In his first days as President, Ford showed a style that was open, relaxed

and impressively self-confident. Of recent Presidents, it was most strongly reminiscent of Dwight Eisenhower—and it is no accident that Ike was Ford's favorite President. Like Eisenhower, Ford is a genuine conservative who has been appalled by what he considers to be the excesses of the last two Administrations, and he is expected to yield considerable power back to the legislative branch. But Ford's Presidency is otherwise a matter of speculation, even among old friends. Although he has held public office for 25 years, from first to last he has toed the Republican Party line and, as House Minority Leader, urged others to do the same. His other guideline has been his conservative Grand Rapids, Mich., constituency.

President Ford will be free of those strictures that bound Congressman Ford—but his politics will probably undergo little change. For one thing, Ford is believed to be at least as right-minded as Nixon in most policy areas; for another, while he is not an ideologue, he lacks the taste for political expediency that allowed Nixon his sudden reverses in economic policy or détente. Although Ford is decidedly more intelligent than reputed—LBJ's stock joke was that "Ford played football too long without his helmet"—he is not an idea man and has scant grounding in economics or foreign affairs. And for the duration of the Nixon term, Ford may well perceive himself as a caretaker without the mandate of popular election. Thus the major



The boy from Grand Rapids: An all-American grid star, Ford served in the Navy and even tried modeling, posing with a girlfriend in a 1940 *Look*



Hans Knopf—Pix

change in the White House may be as atmospheric as substantive; as the new President put it last week, "I expect to follow my instincts of openness and candor."

For a man whose Presidential model harks back two decades, however, Ford will have to grapple with some peculiarly thorny issues of the 1970s. He recognizes that Watergate has created a "domestic impasse which has this nation spinning on its wheels," and he will have to get the machinery moving again. He will have to work with a Congress whose already sizable Democratic majority may balloon in the next election. He will have to balance the popular Nixon policy of détente against his own bias for a strong

national defense policy. And inflation, which he terms "Public Enemy No. 1" (page 64), could well prove his biggest problem. In trying to bring prices under control through stringent fiscal and monetary policies, he could boost unemployment, trigger a full-scale recession or worse—and put a sudden, unhappy end to his Presidential honeymoon.

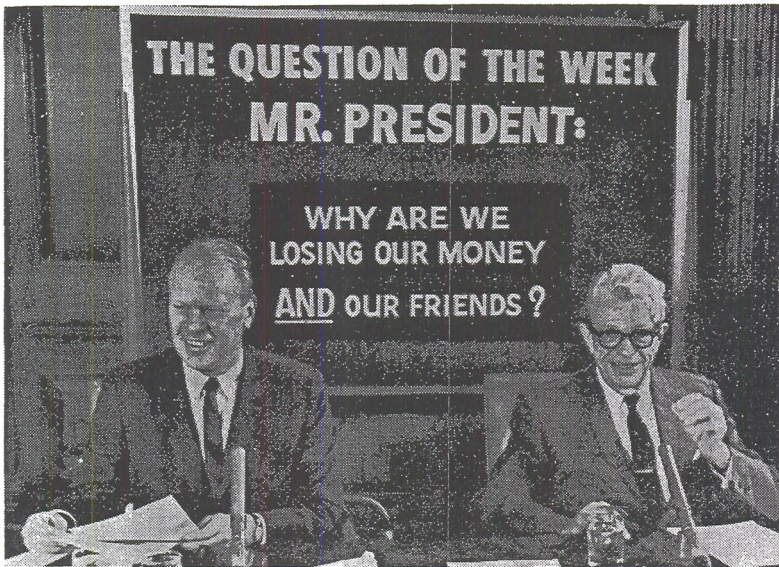
It was only a few days ago that Ford first realized he would become President. "Until this week," a close friend said, "he really didn't believe it was going to happen." He was jolted into reality last Wednesday by a telephone call from White House chief of staff Alexander Haig—a call to Ford's limousine as he was heading to a breakfast of

the Chowder and Marching Club, a good-time Republican fellowship to which Nixon once belonged. In the hour-long meeting that followed, Haig told Ford that Nixon was seriously considering resigning—and Nixon himself confirmed it to Ford next morning in the Oval Office. Ford was "surprisingly calm" afterward, an aide said. "I don't even think he lit up his pipe," he said. With the rest of the nation, Ford watched Nixon give his resignation speech on television that evening. Sad and a bit nervous, he stepped outside to address newsmen briefly, then returned to draft the Inaugural Address that he delivered at noon Friday.

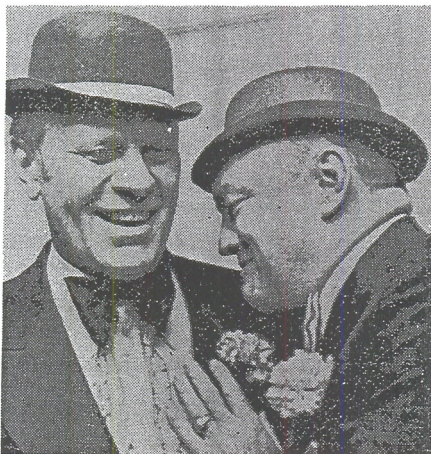
'A LITTLE STRAIGHT TALK'

Coming from a man who is notoriously inarticulate, Ford's seven-minute speech—"just a little straight talk among friends," he called it—had a simple, gripping eloquence. "Our long national nightmare is over," he said. "Our Constitution works. Our great republic is a government of laws and not of men. Here, the people rule." He urged a return to the Golden Rule in politics, as "we bind up the internal wounds of Watergate." It was a cautious, feeling-the-way speech for a new President who was acutely aware that he was the first ever to fill

Newsweek



On the 'Ev and Jerry Show': Teaming up with Dirksen to slam LBJ's 'shocking mismanagement' of the Viet war



On the road: Among stops this year in 40 states, a lively St. Patrick's Day celebration in Charleston, S.C.

AP Photos

Being sworn in as Veep: On the Watergate mess, veering between private dismay and loyalty to Nixon



Fred Ward—Black Star

the office by appointment. The promises were accordingly modest, the tone positively deferential as he asked for "the privilege of appearing before the Congress" to exchange views this week. And there was a refreshing humility in his conclusion that "God helping me, I will not let you down."

'LISTEN TO HENRY'

While his speech was clearly targeted to a nation wracked by Watergate, Ford had already moved to insure stability in foreign affairs by keeping the same cornerstone Nixon had relied on: Secretary of State Henry Kissinger. "All Jerry's got to know about foreign affairs is to listen to Henry," says one Congressman. But Ford, as a fourteen-year member of the Appropriations subcommittee that passes on the Pentagon budget, has his own theories on national defense. Although he believes in détente and trade, he is nervous about the continuing Russian buildup of nuclear strategic weapons. As Vice President, he was amused by rumors last spring that the Soviets wanted to postpone SALT II talks until Nixon left office. "If the Russians think I'm a soft-liner," he remarked, "maybe somebody should send them a few of my speeches." He would like Congress to appropriate immediately another \$2 bil-

lion to \$3 billion in military expenditures. "If you vote to cut it, you vote for war," Ford said recently. "If you vote to keep it, you vote for peace. It's as simple as that."

Ford nonetheless hopes to hold the total budget down to \$301 billion—well below current Congressional estimates—while simultaneously tightening the money supply and thus fighting inflation with what many economists would call unwanted overkill. "Ford is really woolly-headed when he gets into economics," says a congressman, but he is expected to rely heavily on two other Nixon men: Federal Reserve Board chairman Arthur Burns and conservative economist Alan Greenspan, nominated by Nixon three weeks ago to head the Council of Economic Advisers. To supplement their economic policy, Ford will probably take advantage of his political honeymoon to "jawbone" industry and labor at "economic summits"—a Burns idea. But if the policy does produce a recession, Ford has indicated, "I'm not going to change my basically conservative fiscal and economic views." Rather, he has suggested vaguely that groups hardest hit by an economic slowdown might require "special help within budgetary limitations"—possibly meaning the creation of public-service jobs.

It is in the legislative arena that Ford's succession to the Presidency may make the most difference, ending the Nixon era of confrontation that produced 41 vetoes and freeing Congress from the time-consuming process of impeachment and trial. It was with that in mind that Democrat Wilbur Mills, chairman of the House Ways and Means Committee, last week predicted "an excellent chance of passing long-overdue legislation." And Ford, who has countless Congressional friends, boasted on the eve of his swearing-in that "tomorrow I can start out working with Democrats and with Republicans" in both houses.

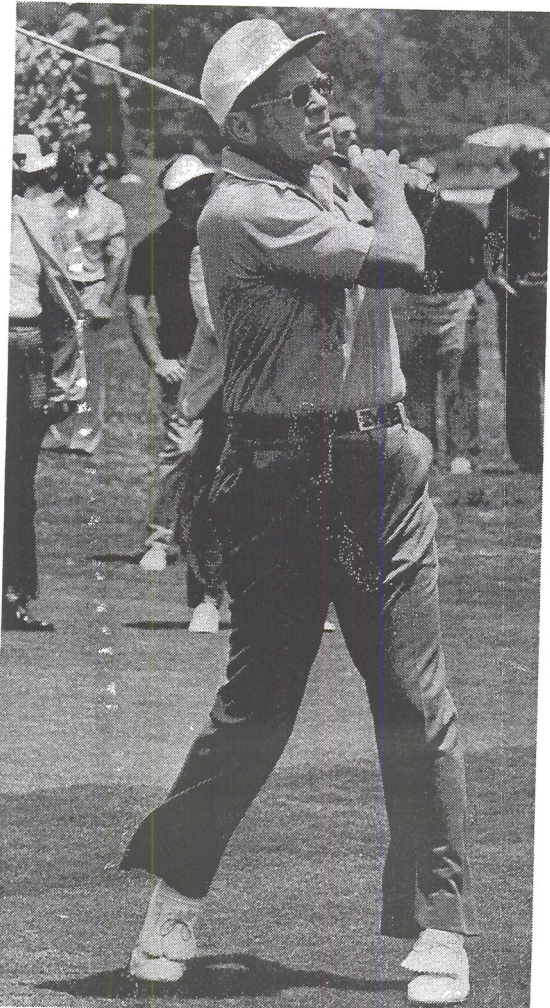
RESISTING REFORM?

Still, many of the liberal bills under consideration—health insurance, consumer protection, tax reform—may be resisted by Ford, and his reaction to a batch of Watergate-reform measures—that include campaign financing and the creation of a permanent special prosecutor—is uncertain. Unlike Nixon, however, Ford may be able to draw on legislative talents and friends to produce some important compromise measures.

Ford's weak voting record on civil rights and his strong stance against bus- ing have already drawn Congressional fire—and on that front, warns one Demo-

NATIONAL AFFAIRS

crat, "We are going to be in for some rough battles with the White House." But as Vice President, Ford privately advised, "Forget the voting record. The voting record reflects Grand Rapids." During his brief tenure he met with several black groups—a practice generally shunned by Nixon and Agnew—and did his best to reassure them of his basic goodwill. But Ford's basic approach will nonetheless be conservative, and he is expected to resist any new and costly social programs. "He believes strongly in the decentralization of the Federal government . . . things like revenue sharing," said Sen. Robert Griffin of Michigan. "He probably would push programs like work incentive harder than Nixon."



Mark Godfrey—Magnum

Whatever his policies, however, Ford is almost surely safe in promising an open Administration. He has befriended Republicans of all degrees of regularity, campaigning willingly for anti-Vietnam Rep. Paul McCloskey of California and vainly trying to prevent anti-Nixon Rep. Donald Riegle of Michigan from leaving the GOP. To staff his White House, Ford is accordingly putting together a mixed bag of Nixon holdovers, veteran congressmen and old Michigan friends with administrative experience, while keeping open his lines to Congressional elders in both parties (page 28). In fact, says

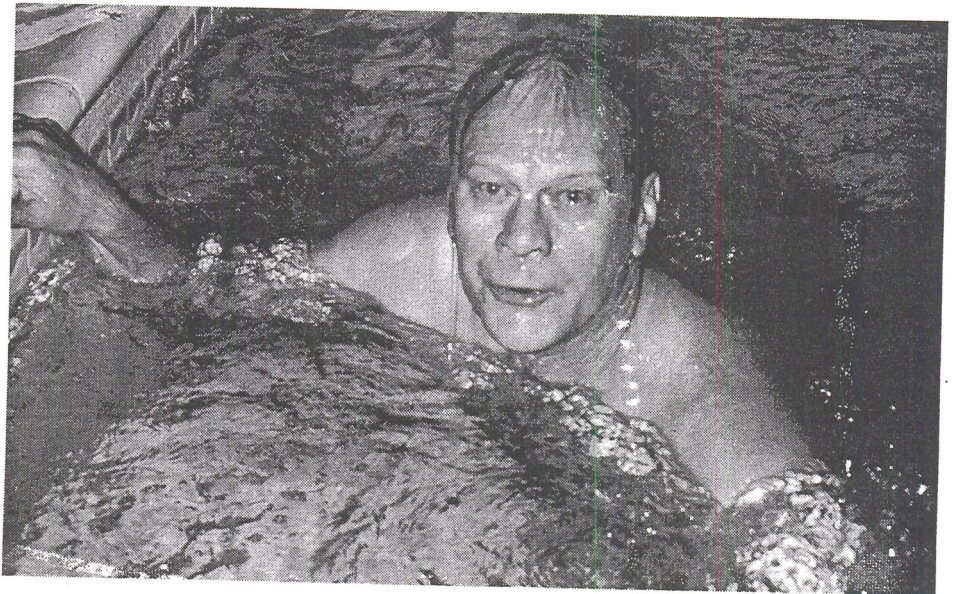
Charles Goodell, the liberal former New York Senator who is expected to be offered a high post in the Administration, Ford may be entirely too accessible. "He has a tendency to listen to everybody," Goodell explained. "That will be curbed of necessity."

FAMILIAR FACES

Ford said last week he would name his Vice President within ten days, and speculation has centered on former New York Gov. Nelson Rockefeller and Melvin Laird, the veteran former congressman and Defense Secretary who helped promote Ford to the House leadership nine years ago, with a dozen lesser lights also on the list (page 32). In addition to Kissinger, the Nixon Cabinet members likely to stay on include Interior Secretary Rogers Morton, an old Ford friend and political confidant, Treasury Secretary William Simon and, despite early re-

problem is that he's just not a 'no comment' person." He befriended the journalists who regularly covered him, asking them as guests to his formal dinner last spring for Jordan's King Hussein and to his son Mike's wedding reception last month. And within an hour of his swearing-in, the President visited the White House press room to introduce his press secretary, J.F. (Jerry) terHorst, and once again promise an "open, candid Administration." Ford's fondness for journalists, he explained recently, also stems from a fundamental belief that the media are "helpful in trying to preserve some of the great liberties that we have in this country."

There are as few pretensions about the personal Ford as there are about the official. Up close, Ford is a happy extrovert who likes people enormously and is enormously well liked in return. As Vice President, for example, he tried to mem-



Dennis Brack—Black Star

'Your next-door neighbor': Still an active sportsman, Ford enjoys an occasional round of golf and a daily, predawn swim

ports to the contrary, Defense Secretary James Schlesinger. Ford's friends are urging him to jettison Labor Secretary Peter Brennan to make peace with AFL-CIO chief George Meany, and appease consumers by dropping outspoken Agriculture Secretary Earl Butz. Ford may ask former Treasury Secretary George Shultz to return in another capacity. And to give his Cabinet a bipartisan flavor, Ford is reportedly considering naming a Democrat—if he can find a non-controversial figure for the right job.

Ford's open-door policy clearly extends to the press. As a Vice President on a killing travel schedule, his contacts with reporters were friendly, frequent—52 press conferences, 85 formal interviews and at least 100 more rap sessions in midair—and sometimes indiscreet. "When he says he should not talk about something, then damn it, he should not talk about it," one aide griped. "The

orize the first names of all 60 Secret Service men assigned to him. He can spend hours zestfully trading banalities on a reception line, then shrug off a bad speech with an infectious laugh and an aside to the press: "Wasn't worth a damn, was it?" He is an Eagle Scout who can repeat the code verbatim and an unabashed lowbrow who turns to the sports pages first, rarely cracks a book and once told the Harvard Young Republican Club: "I've never read anything Solzhenitsyn has written, but I understand he's quite superb." His tastes run to double-knit suits, Edgeworth pipe tobacco and bourbon and water.

Ford's resemblance to Nixon ends with his taste for cottage cheese laced with ketchup. As President, Griffin said recently, Ford's style "would be a lot like that of Dwight Eisenhower. Like Ike, Ford is warm and friendly and people feel they can trust him." Ford can

□ Newsweek, August 19, 1974

rival Eisenhower at muddling the language—"The trouble with Schlesinger," he mused once, "is that he's one of those acamedician types"—and before the simple eloquence of his Inaugural last week, his rehearsed addresses were scarcely better. In personal conversation, however, Ford can be surprisingly expressive. "Gerald Ford is just Jerry," a friend from Grand Rapids sums up. "He's nothing any different from your next-door neighbor."

Until the Fords move to the White House this week, they will still be the family next door—living for the last nineteen years in a modest Colonial-style brick and frame house in Alexandria, Va. Its greatest luxury is a heated, outdoor pool where Ford swam several laps early each morning before breakfast. He is devoted to his wife and their four children (page 30); as Vice-President, he broke into a crowded campaign tour to fly home virtually every Sunday and interrupted anything short of a Presidential conference to take a family call. Like a growing number of Washington figures, Ford is an evangelical Christian. But as his former hometown pastor puts it, Ford "didn't wear his religion on his sleeve."

A MODELING STINT

In a sense, Ford has never stopped being the boy from Grand Rapids who starred on the high school gridiron and played center at the University of Michigan. He put himself through Yale Law School by coaching football—and a brief stint of photographic modeling with a girlfriend—then served in the Navy in World War II. Back home in Grand Rapids, he was elected to the House of Representatives in 1948, two years after a Californian named Richard Nixon arrived in Washington. Ford served quietly for fifteen years, learning the ropes, doing his homework and establishing a solid, conservative reputation that attracted the younger House Republicans who wanted to shake up the party leadership in the mid-'60s. Boosted by Griffin and Goodell, Ford rose to the chairmanship of the House Republican Conference, then in 1965 was pushed by Goodell and Laird into the Minority Leader's post.

Vietnam was Ford's primary focus for the next few years—and in televised tandem with Senate Minority Leader Everett Dirksen as "Ev and Jerry," he attacked LBJ for failing to wage an all-out war. He also campaigned hard for Republicans everywhere, contributing in 1966 to a GOP gain of 47 House seats. And when Nixon was elected President in 1968, Ford became his loyal servant in Congress, faithfully advocating his bills. When the Senate rejected two conservative Nixon nominees for the Su-

preme Court, Ford—in what was probably the nadir of his Congressional career—launched a vindictive and short-lived effort to impeach liberal Justice William O. Douglas. What Ford himself wanted was to be Speaker of the House. But as a Republican majority became increasingly improbable, he promised Betty that he would quit politics in 1976, possibly going into private law practice in Grand Rapids. Those plans went awry on Oct. 12, 1973, when Nixon chose him as Vice President.

As Veep, Ford walked a shaky tight-rope, balancing his private dismay over Watergate against his determination not to contribute to Nixon's fall. "When the pages of history are written," he told

Ford found himself in the Oval Office.

He also found himself in logical position for the GOP Presidential nomination in 1976. In recent months Ford has widened his lead over other contenders, winning in his last weeks as Veep fully 27 per cent of the Republicans polled by Gallup (the runners-up: Sen. Barry Goldwater and Gov. Ronald Reagan, each with 16 per cent). For going through the public motions of loyalty to the President at a time when few other Republicans could afford to, Ford has earned the goodwill of party nabobs. And he has amassed countless IOU's by speaking and fund-raising for GOP candidates across the country. Thus the consensus is that, given a modicum of luck, Ford can have the nomination if he wants it. "We think he's a smart politician, a loyal party man and a President who will run a relaxed but taut ship," said one state Republican chairman. "He'll be our President in 1976 and there's no one who can stop him from getting that nomination, if he doesn't make any mistakes."

A BLOOD OATH FOR BETTY

Ford has consistently denied that personal ambitions lay behind his campaign stumping or his glad-handing. "I just don't have that terrible drive to be President," he has said. "And besides, I've taken the blood oath for Betty." Before last week, he maintained that the only condition under which he would accept the 1976 nomination would be a convention deadlock so serious that it threatened to fragment the party he has been trying to salvage. "Right now I would say that Jerry really is not interested in 1976," insisted one close Capitol friend. "But there is no way of telling what will happen once he tastes the White House."

The real test of Ford's viability in 1976, however, is the next 896 days. A crisis in the economy or foreign affairs could destroy any Presidential aspirations—or guarantee them. In the end, one of the GOP's oldest hands philosophized, events will make the man. "Ford has many of the good qualities of Harry Truman and Dwight Eisenhower," he said. "He will do as well as some, not as well as others. The Presidency is a chimera, for it is not really a question of the pressures of the job bringing out the best or worst qualities of the man. Essentially it is the attempt to influence events, most of them unforeseen. One looks mainly for judgment, wisdom and character. And the prudent man then goes home and lights a candle or sells his stock, for the President—whoever he is—is almost certain to lack one of these qualities. We can only hope events are kind to him, for then they will be kind to us."



Haynie—Louisville Courier Journal

"Hi, guys! I'm Jerry Ford, the new substitute ... Geewhiz, how'd you fellas manage t'get so muddy?"

NEWSWEEK last May, "nobody can say I contributed to it." He traveled 130,000 miles in his eight-month tenure, bearing to 40 states not only the banner of the Republican Party but a message of stubborn faith in the nation as well. His balancing act became more difficult with each new Watergate disclosure, and in the last few months Ford was veering between an affirmation of Nixon's innocence and an insistence that the President turn over any evidence to the impeachment inquiry. When impeachment appeared inevitable a fortnight ago, Ford maintained that if he had his "druthers," he would prefer a vote of censure. But before that alternative could be explored by Congress, Nixon exploded his last bombshell—and Jerry