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Ford Tells Philosophy On Writing Checks

Washington

President Ford admitted last night that even a well-paid public official has to fudge a little in his checkbook to cover the bills that keep on coming.

During a televised news conference, Mr. Ford was asked about some aspects of his personal finances that came to light in a review of his bank records and income tax returns during his vice presidential confirmation hearings.

The examination showed that at one point, the checks Mr. Ford had written put his bank account \$3000 in the red but the account was soon reimbursed by that amount. How, asked the questioner, did then Representative Gerald Ford (Rep-Mich.) come up with that much money so quickly?

"That was my next paycheck,"

Mr. Ford told a laughing audience of reporters.

He then continued with a little lesson on the art of checkwriting.

"I think a few people in this country have written checks, and then waited until the end of the month and then mailed the checks ... We mailed those checks after we had the money in the account, but I wrote the checks before the end of the month," Mr. Ford said.

"It's a perfectly legitimate thing, and there was never an overdraft in my account."

The final question of the news conference also dealt with Mr. Ford's check-writing with reporters observing that, like many Americans, "you write checks."

"Oh, no, I don't," Mr. Ford interjected. "I've never been overdrawn, young lady."

The reporter then asked how Mr. Ford and his wife managed to live in high-priced Washington on only \$5 to \$15 in cash each week during 1972, as shown by his tax returns while in Congress.

Mr. Ford replied with a lengthy review of how the Internal Revenue Service, Congress' Joint Committee on Taxation, separation House and Senate committees, and, most recently, the Watergate special prosecutor, have pored over his financial and tax records and have given him "a clean bill of health."

"Those are the facts of life," Mr. Ford said. "I write checks."

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