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Ford's Speech: Same Priorities

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WASHINGTON, Aug. 12—It was not an inaugural address. It was not a State of the Union Message. It came nearer than anything else to being "just a little straight talk among friends," which Ford described the remarks he made after being sworn in last Friday.

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The friends to whom he addressed his remarks this evening were friends indeed, the assembled members of the United States Senate and House of Representatives, a body in which Mr. Ford served for 25 years and where he says he did not have "a single enemy."

They interrupted him with applause 32 times, and they probably would have cheered if he had read them a page from the telephone book. They were that anxious to show their approval of him, and their hopes for his Administration.

The speech, however, was not all that much of a departure from the policies and plans of his discredited predecessor. When President Ford started listing the legislation he wanted, he sounded very much like Richard Nixon in his State of the Union Address last Jan. 30. They both talked about in-

Goals and Remedies Called Similar to Nixon's Policies

flation, energy, health care, education and, surprisingly enough, "protecting the rights of personal privacy for every American"—to use Mr. Nixon's words.

President Ford elicited an extra cheer and a half when he added, "There will be no illegal tappings, eavesdroppings, buggings or break-ins in my Administration." The word "my" was underlined both in his text and in his delivery.

Among those who heard those words, which implied a rebuke to former President Nixon, were Mr. Nixon's younger daughter Julie and her husband, David Eisenhower.

No doubt the legislative priorities presented by Mr. Nixon and Mr. Ford were similar because the nation's problems remain the same, and the Government has not dealt vigorously with them. Most of the program that President Nixon outlined last January is still languishing in Congress.

There was a similarity not only in the programs outlined but also in the vagueness of the remedies proposed for the nation's No. 1 problem, inflation.

President Ford was no more concrete tonight than President Nixon was three weeks ago when, in his last public appearance before resigning from office, he delivered an address in Los Angeles on the economy.

Mr. Ford proposed to balance the Federal budget, cut Government spending, reactivate the Cost of Living Council to monitor wages and prices, and convene an economic summit meeting with the President himself presiding. It was not exactly a spine-tingling set of proposals.

Still, for all its lack of novelty and substance, President Ford's first appearance before a joint session of Congress was obviously heart-warming, both for the audience and for the speaker.

All down the aisle, entering and leaving the House chamber, the President paused to shake hands. He and Carl Albert of Oklahoma, the House Speaker, swapped Congressional jokes. Old friends could be heard calling the new President "Jerry."

Although Mr. Ford could never earn a living as a stand-up comedian, he managed to get five audible laughs out of his speech. The first one was when he said: "I don't want a honeymoon with you. I want a good marriage."

And the speech may be remembered as much for that line as any other.



United Press International

Listening attentively during President Ford's address were, from left: Republicans John B. Anderson and Leslie C. Arends of Illinois and John J. Rhodes of Arizona.