

# Editor

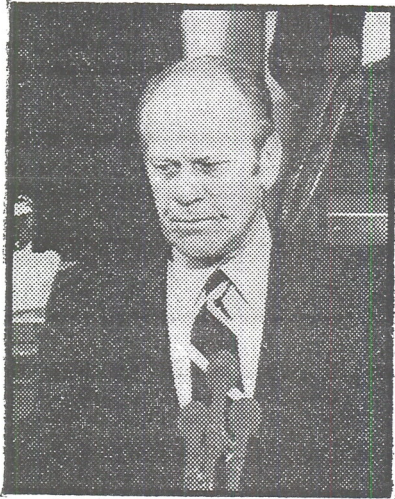
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Leadership Need

To the Editor:

William V. Shannon ("President of Oil," column July 20) makes a preposterous assertion. He says "no one who knew Gerald Ford and his dreary, negative record during a quarter-century in the House of Representatives would ever have chosen him to lead the nation in meeting a complex and unprecedented situation."

Unfortunately, that is simply not the case. For who but his comrades in the Congress were better situated to know Gerald Ford and his dreary record. Nevertheless, his fellow House Republicans chose him to be their standard-bearer in 1964 when they dumped Minority Leader Charles Halleck. A decade later, after proving himself to be an uncreative, unimaginative and uninspired leader, a heavily Democratic House and Senate gave Gerald Ford their seal of approval to lead the nation after he was nominated by a discredited President heavily implicated in the Watergate scandal.

For this reason, the veto battles which have been acted out between



Ford and Congress are laughable. Congress was fully aware of how it was shortchanging the nation by confirming Ford as Vice President. Congress must bear a large share of the responsibility for the state of the nation with Ford at the helm.

Pitifully, however, most members of Congress are as limited in vision as the President is. Witness their haste to jump on the Mayaguez bandwagon and congratulate the President for proving that the United States won't let itself be pushed around by those nasty Cambodians. Never mind that forty Marines died rescuing 39 crew members. The escapade had (after the Vietnam fiasco) the smell of success. And every Congressman wants to be on the side of a winner.

The crisis of our system of government in this decade is the realization that nobody in Washington—on either end of the Hill—has the capacity for true leadership. As Shannon puts it, referring to the rise in oil prices, "In this crisis, no one is defending the interests of American consumers." In a larger sense, no one is defending the people of America. Under these circumstances, things can only get worse.

HOWARD MODELL

Highland, N. Y., July 20, 1975