

Ford Means 'Fresh Air' to L.I. Town

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BLUE POINT, L.I., Aug. 9—Colt Gibner stood on the deck of his boat late this afternoon and took a deep breath.

"This air is different now," he said. "I can feel it."

He was not referring to the sharp, salty breeze that flowed in from the Great South Bay into this community of 5,000 on Long Island's South Shore. He was alluding to the change in Government in Washington.

Resident after resident of this staunchly Republican community, where the Suffolk County Republican party has its headquarters, said today that the mood of the area was perceptibly brighter because a new President had been sworn in.

Many people used the expression "a breath of fresh air," in referring to President Ford. And numerous others said that maybe it was now time for the kind of "straight talk" Mr. Ford promised after his swearing-in ceremony today.

Broken Promises Lamented

One resident, James Luchei, recalled Mr. Nixon's visit to Suffolk County in 1968.

"He promised us a lot," he said, "but he did not deliver. He turned out to be dishonest."

Suffolk County gave Mr. Nixon his biggest plurality of any single county in the country, in both 1968 and 1972.

"Most people are disappointed because when you get to that position there are certain things you just don't do," said Paul Hammarth, who owns a delicatessen. "Ford's got to get the economy going, but he foreign policy. Nixon did well abroad."

The issue of inflation bothers people here a lot more than Watergate itself.

"Other Presidents have had their own cover-ups," John Frashen said. "That doesn't concern me as much as the fact that Mr. Nixon sharply cut my buying power."

Lingering Bitterness Noted

Al Furchert, who owns a Mobil gasoline station on Montauk Highway here, said: "Ford's No. 1 priority must be the economy. There are too many people out of work."

Some residents expressed alarm about the damage done to the Republican party because of Watergate.

"The party's in sad shape because of Nixon," said Jim McKinley, who owns an antique shop on Atlantic Avenue.

"There is too much bitterness left. I don't think that Ford can salvage the party in time for this year's elections. I feel sorry for him because of the mess he's been handed down."

But David Jedele disagreed.

"President Ford is a shot in the arm for the G.O.P.," he said. "They need a man like him."

Mr. Jedele said he was impressed by Mr. Ford's speech this morning at the White House.

"It was an excellent, excellent speech," he said. "It was humble, low-keyed. We don't need any more national rhetoric or national hysteria."

"A lot of eyes are going to be on Mr. Ford," Mr. Gibner said. "Everybody's going to be watching him. He has some trying times ahead of him and I hope he's up to it."

Lucille Rendell seemed to sum up what nearly everybody appear to feel around here: "We are glad the cloud has been lifted. Really glad. I hope Mr. Ford has a clearer sky than Mr. Nixon."