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Page 4B
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The Text of Sen. Bob Dole's Acceptance Speech

The text of Sen. Bob Dole's acceptance speech as the vice-presidential nominee:

My fellow Republicans—my fellow Americans.

I stand before you tonight proud of the confidence our President has shown in me, gratified by your trust, humbled by this new opportunity to serve the nation we love, and determined to work with all my heart to insure four more years of Republican leadership in the White House.

President Ford's administration began with a prayer. Trusting in a just and beneficent God and in the courage and wisdom and good will of our people, the President accepted stewardship of our nation in one of the most difficult times in our history.

With the help of God, with the good will of our people and with his own courage, compassion and wisdom, America has weathered the storm.

Today there are those who tell Americans to lower their expectations. America was not built by men and women with limited vision and small hopes and low expectations.

It was built by men and women with tomorrow on their minds. It was built by believers—by those who could look across the broad sweep of a boundless land of unbounded opportunity and see possibilities none before had ever even dreamed of.

In their eyes the future gleamed brightly, and upon their achievements we live today—with more freedom, more opportunity, more dignity, more wealth and with greater obligations, than any people before in history.

My fellow Republicans—we need not ask the American people to lower their expectations.

Rather let us ask them to raise their expectations ever higher—as they always have in the past—and let us do so with that confidence which comes with the knowledge that we have a president who has met and will continue to meet the highest expectations—and to excite the highest aspirations of our people.

We have heard much about offering the American people a choice this year. I believe we should. I believe we do.



"We live in a dangerous world and danger for us is lessened only by the fact that those whose ambitions might exceed their common sense know what the President of the United States stands for."

The eyes of the world—and the hopes of those who are free and those who wish to be free—focus on the United States.

Wherever tyranny reigns in the world, it reigns through the instruments of government.

All history tells us that to maximize government is to minimize human freedom.

I believe that the promise of America is not told, nor shall it be fulfilled, through the oppressive constraints of government.

The question and the purpose of human liberty are not the rights of government, the dignity of government or the future of government. Rather they are the rights of the individual, and the future of humanity itself.

We have written a long and noble chapter in the history of human liberty. We have proved that it works—that the powerful engine of freedom pushes mankind further toward justice, equality, prosperity and security than ever government managed to drag humanity in those directions.

And so, my fellow Republicans, let us not define ourselves in terms of what we stand against—but in terms of what we stand for.

The wisdom of what we stand for is demonstrated in the record of the great and good man who leads this nation today.

In the wake of Vietnam there were those who felt that the will of our people was so sorely tried that we would not soon have the strength to wage peace in the world—to halt aggression before it began.

But President Ford understood that a free people are never too tired to defend their freedom. And so where our rights and interests have been threatened, he has responded—and upon the evidence of America's will to stand fast for what it believes, a structure of peace is being erected in the world.

In the wake of a continued inflation and recession, there were those who argued that the best medicine for a crippled economy was to cripple it further. They advocated the short-term solution for long-term disaster, believing the American people were unwilling to make the necessary sacrifices to restore prosperity to our land. They were wrong. President Ford knows that the way back to prosperity is through persistence and perseverance—yes, and through sacrifice.

The way back to a healthy economy has been difficult and painful. But by refusing to resign us to the seductive panaceas of more government spending, President Ford has persisted, he has persevered—and he has prevailed.

He has suffered abuse, he has endured accusations about his concern for the jobless; he has borne with patience those who have questioned his compassion for the poor, and he has put this economy back on the road to good health.

The shrill denunciations of those who oppose his economic policies come not from concern that he might fail, but from desperation at the fact that he is succeeding.

And he is succeeding, my friends, because he has placed his faith in the American people, and not in the discredited gimmicks of government.

My fellow Americans, President Ford has begun the great work of building peace, renewing prosperity, and restoring confidence in the basic institutions of freedom in America.

But there is more to be done.

We are at peace with the world, but the world is not at peace with itself. We live in a dangerous world and the danger for us is lessened only by the fact that those whose ambitions might exceed their common sense know what the President of the United States stands for.

Here at home, there are still those who believe more in government than in people. We have, for example, a Congress which lurches along in a search for more and more ways to gain control not merely over the way we live, but over the purposes for which we live—which ought to be left to the decisions of the hearts and minds of each single individual.

The freedom and sovereignty of our land count for nothing if they are not matched equally by the freedom and sovereignty of every American.

Today our businesses and industries continue to be burdened by endless confusing government regulations. Certainly we must have laws that govern the way the private sector conducts itself, just as we have laws that govern how our people conduct themselves.

"Our task today is nothing less than to further the principles upon which our nation and our party were established. Our task today and in the weeks ahead must be to insure the election of a President who understands those principles, and lives by them—and leads this nation by them."



But just as we must avoid legislating freedom, creativity and initiative out of the lives of our people, so we must avoid legislating these virtues out of our system of free enterprise.

We have to free the free enterprise system.

Until we get government out of the business sector, we are going to have difficulty getting people back into jobs that are real and productive.

Until we get government out of the credit markets, business will be unable to expand as it ought to and employ more people.

There is work to be done, ladies and gentlemen.

Until we break the stranglehold of the party of big government over the Congress of the United States, we are going to have more federal spending, more federal control over our private lives, and more empty promises that leave our people disillusioned and frustrated.

Let us not be deterred or discomfited by those who interpret the long and hard-fought primary campaign as a sign of division in Republican ranks. Let us rather take pride in the knowledge that the battle was honorably waged—and honorably won. Let us rather take pride in the fact that we had two such men as President Ford and Governor Reagan to contend for this nation's leadership.

I mean to be worthy of that honor.

In this bicentennial year we have the opportunity to restore this nation to those principles upon which America was founded 200 years ago. It is for us now to determine whether we shall be the designers of our destiny—or the victims of it.

America was founded upon the belief that men and women had the right to be free.

Our Republican party was born in the struggle to preserve and extend freedom.

Our task today is nothing less than to further the principles of freedom upon which our nation and our party were established. Our task today and in the days and weeks ahead must be to insure the election of a President who understands those principles, and lives by them—and leads this nation by them. With our help, with the help of the American people, and with the help of almighty God, we shall succeed.

Thank you.

KC TIMES 8-20-76

Ford Threw Press a Curve Ball in Selecting Dole

By Harry Jones, Jr.

A member of the staff of the news media as they pack their bags, pay their hotel and motel bills and wing their way home, snoozing while in flight, probably, for lack of enough sleep all week.

It must have been disconcerting to President Gerald Ford, so used to seeing even the most trite rhetoric about flag or country cheered wildly at the convention, to see the unenthusiastic scattering of applause that greeted his announcement at Crown Center yesterday as to who would be his running mate.

At least 500 persons had packed the room in which he made the announcement, but probably 400 of them were members of the media, virtually none of whom found it in their hearts or within the groundrules of their professed neutrality to signify either pleasure or disdain for the President's choice.

And so when he revealed his choice, with Sen. Bob Dole standing on the platform with him, smiling, only about a fifth of the crowd applauded. They rest just stared ahead, or concentrated on their camera work or what they were penning into their notebooks. It was eerie to behold.

Late in the no-questions-please press conference, Vice-President Nelson Rockefeller was introduced. The applause was again thin, but far more sustained than it had been for Ford, Dole or anyone else that morning. One newsman was observed clapping his hands for Rocky until the reporter sitting next to him turned toward him and stared him down with a "that's unprofessional" scowl.

Ron Nessen, presidential press secretary, had announced shortly after 11 a.m. that the President would pick his Veep at 11:30 instead of noon, as has been previously announced. As a result, nearly everyone intending to cover the announcement was in his place by 11:30. This resulted in a half-hour of expectant waiting by those inside the room and much gnashing of teeth in the offices of afternoon newspapers all over the country as they held their next editions until the announcement was made.

That half-hour went something like this (as viewed first from a standing, then sitting-on-the-floor position to the far right of the podium):

Pad-and-pencil journalists are filling the chairs in the front. Most of the TV and still photographers

are on a raised platform behind them. Maybe 100, probably more, cameras can be seen either on tripods or hanging from necks.

David Broder and Jules Witcover, two of the Washington Post "heavies," walk in together looking kind of Postish and sit down on the floor. I'm standing in a good position with no obstructions in front of me until a TV guy with a large, portable camera and football player shoulders moves in front of me unceremoniously. I move to the left, then the right. "Excuse me," says a pushy female pad-and-pencil as she bulls her way in front of me and stands beside the big guy with the camera.

Instead of objecting, as I should have, I scribble. "Cameras use cameras and pushy broads use their sex to block view," contenting myself with the knowledge that I can at least retaliate the next day in print.

A Secret Service man walks up to another Secret Service man and whispers into his ear at some length. When he pulls away, his eyes dart about checking at least a dozen persons out in the matter of no more than two seconds. All Secret Service men's eyes dart

around like that, it seems.

Another cameraman, with shoulders even bigger than the first one's, crowds in next to me, then in front of me as though his network had assigned him that particular position a month ago with full clearance from the Secret Service, FBI and U.S. Army. I decide to move and sit down on the floor. If Witcover and Broder can do it, so can I. People within earshot are making weak jokes about whom Ford will pick.

"It was going to be Ruckelshaus, but the headline writers revolted, so now it's going to be Dole," said someone prophetically.

Someone else suggests it will be Spiro Agnew. Nessen, press secretary, announces the President and his running mate have just left the President's hotel room and are on their way with their "spouses," a word that provokes a little laughter for those who are fantasizing his choice might be a woman. Then Nessen says there will be no question-and-answer session after the announcement.

"Are we here just as an audience?" one of the newsmen in the pad-and-pencil section demands.

"I thought you were here to find

out who the nominee would be," replies Nessen.

"Well, I'm not going to stay under those circumstances," snorts Witcover, pretending to start to rise. He is only joking.

A camerawoman with an Eastern accent is discussing Sen. Howard Baker of Tennessee and Senator Dole as the two most likely choices.

"But Dole's from Kansas," she says.

"Tennessee isn't much better," says the cameraman standing next to her.

"I guess, but Kansas."

Two men in a separate conversation are still trying to make funny guesses. One suggests it will be Henry Kissinger and another says may it will be Solzhenitsyn.

"How about Schweitzer?" adds another guy and finally someone laughs.

Nessen switches on a television set in the front of the room. Cronkite is talking about the impending announcement back in Kemper.

Nessen switches to Channel 4 and an NBC floor man ("What's his name?") "I can't remember. I've seen him before." is saying something in the room we are all in. Look over by the podium and there he is. Gosh.

It is high noon and Secret Service guys are beginning to stir from their darty-eyed parade rests and you suddenly feel like the audience of "Let's Make A Deal," the game show that features a big curtain and when the curtain is raised the contestant learns whether she has just won a 1976 Cadillac or a broken down ironing board. And the curtain parts and...

There he is. President of the United States of America, And with him...

"Well I'll be damned," says the camerawoman who doesn't like Kansas.

Ford talks. Dole talks. A couple of senators who had fought against each other until early this morning talk about sweetness and light. Suddenly you are aware of what sounds like an army of little kids with toy crickets only it is the 100 or so photographers taking picture after picture, click click click, as all these great personages talk. Rocky talks. Click click. The Ford children come forward. Click click. Mrs. Ford and Mrs. Dole step forward and join their husbands. Click click. And it's over.

"So it's the peanut against the pineapple," someone says and the guy next to him laughs.