



H. R. Haldeman Diaries Collection, January 18, 1969 – April 30, 1973

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Thursday, August 24.

Big flap on speech problems, particularly on the Michigan school speech, because nobody got the background and so the President chucked out everything that was prepared, told Ehrlichman to redo it, and he did, and had a big thing on property tax, which the President also rejected and decided to give the speech extemporaneously. As it turned out, that was a real coup because it turned out to be sensational. He gave a marvelous speech on recalling some of his school teachers and what they had meant to him, and making the line that kids should never give up, always try again, and so on.

We put out a busing statement that rode well on the news, so we got the busing point across, even though we weren't allowed to use it in the speech. It came out fine, but it was only by luck rather than the version that came out. The President did the good job, the rest of us really pretty much blew the thing. He wants more tight material, and we've got to keep pushing on that.

On the plane, he talked to me about the speech writing problem, said that we really need a new group on speeches who pay attention to how the President talks. The prepared stuff was not helpful for any of the things today, especially Detroit, where they had no concept of the audience. On the Legion speech, they put it together in a way that was not effective, and the President changed that, actually, most of us felt he had screwed it up because it lost its sense of pacing, but at least he got the points over he wanted to. He feels that the mood of the country is upbeat, good news, not ugly, a good feel, not contentious, and that our speeches have to fit the mood of the audience and the country. And he wants the writers to take today's two talks and look at that on the basis of that's how the President talks.

In San Diego, he committed a monumental gaff in an anecdote on Art Linkletter sleeping in Pat Nixon's bed again probably because of the lack of preparation. He got into some schedule ideas for the future, after the San Clemente arrival this evening, which incidentally was sensational, with a huge crowd. He thinks now that he should go out and touch up the country once a week. Wants to get to Atlanta and Massachusetts right away. Wants to be sure in the next poll that we



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check on teacher's strikes, and whether we should make an issue out of that. Wants to go over the whole schedule thing with me tomorrow, as well as speech writing problems.

End of August 24.