



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

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Wednesday-- Thursday, December 2.

The President made his old folks speech this morning, and it came out better than he had expected it to. He raised the question, by phone with me before he went over, as to whether it would be useful for him to take a swipe at the tax check-off thing and decided to do it, on the basis of talking about a \$100 million program for the aged and saying this was a much better use of that money than for political campaign funds, as the Senate was trying to put through. He got a big hand for that. A lot of interruption for applause as he tossed out various little programs of \$10, \$15, \$20 million apiece. He was glad it came off as well as it did, but pretty disgusted with the process by which he had to get the reaction. Later in the day, on the tax check-off thing, MacGregor got his maneuvering going and ended up with a deal worked out by Wilbur Mills, who decided to move to change it from an appropriation to an authorization and then to postpone it until after the '72 elections. And then Burns was going to move to eliminate the check-off altogether and authorize an appropriation not to exceed the limits applied for broadcasting in the Campaign Spending Bill. All this got jiggled around during the day and came up with a-- with basically the Mills Bill, as the President and MacGregor agreed that Burns should not go along with it that our position should be to oppose the whole thing right on through, but to hope that Mills won out, which is exactly what happened. So we came out the best we could have on it.

He had a long talk with me during the day on speechwriter problems. He wanted me to talk to Price and really shake up the staff on the need for a whole different approach, on the basis that, in a speech to a live audience, you've got to say something of interest to the audience. He felt the aging speech, while it was okay because it was a programmatic problem, it still looked like writing by committee. There was no flavor and it was not for the ear and it was not in tune with the people. He's saying that he may go very hard the other way and just do all the speeches himself and let the writing unit do the statements and messages and that sort of thing. He feels that the problem is their obsession with being Presidential, that there's no fire in the belly except what the President puts in, and that he may have spoiled them by just using their stuff as the starting point, when they should give him a finished product. He's concerned that their stuff is



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sounding more and more like Eisenhower's—that is, consensus writing—and feels that maybe the problem is that it's bicycled around too much and there are too many ideas that take all the steam out of it. And he thinks they should cut down on the consultations.

He left for Key Biscayne after the Golda Meir meeting and a swearing-in ceremony for Butz, who was confirmed today. The President blew the swearing-in a bit, in that the reason for rushing it was so that Butz could announce a big corn purchase deal tomorrow, but the President kept alluding to it during the ceremony, which takes the steam off of it, especially when MacGregor came in afterwards and told me he had learned that Ralston Purina had brought--bought two million bushels of corn yesterday afternoon—or this afternoon, I guess—which creates a monumental problem, since Butz has just come off the Ralston Purina board and Hardin has just gone on it. Hopefully that won't get out. Anyway, he went on to Key Biscayne tonight, and presumably he'll stay there for the weekend.

End of December 2.