



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

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Wednesday, December 1.

The President spent the morning getting ready for his trip to Chicago this afternoon and in an NSC meeting, plus a couple of odds and ends with some Congressmen. The particular issue at staff meeting was the whole status in Congress. The Butz nomination goes before the Senate today, with a 1:00 vote tomorrow. We have the problem still hanging on, the opposition to him. Plus the problem of a logjam on the foreign aid and OEO [Office of Economic Opportunity], which were back up again since the continuing resolution runs out. Ellender said he's going to leave without taking action. And then the Tax Bill is still hanging fire; so there was some discussion of action on that.

Then the President spent a lot of time pondering his speech problems and speechwriting problems. He thinks that we should get rid of the whole idea of speeches to groups, such as we're doing today and tomorrow, because we don't get anything out of them that we put in an enormous amount of effort that doesn't gain any more than we would get from just reading a radio speech or releasing a statement that the President wouldn't have to even look at. He's back to the problem of speechwriters, feeling that we still really need an editor, and that we have someone who's got to get audience pizzazz into the speeches, a political type editor. He says the writers we have now are more interested in how it's going to read in history than in how it affects history, and this is what-- this is wrong. He thinks the speech problem may—he was saying on the plane going to Chicago—may be just the need of a writer, rather than an editor. But a writer who thinks in terms of cheer lines and humor the things that make a speech click. Our speeches all read all right intellectually, but they aren't speeches, and he feels the speech guys don't really know the difference. After the Chicago speech, he made the point that maybe he should have had a talk with the writers on the purpose of the meeting, which he had thought was to have an enthusiastic youth audience, but we completely blew it by doing a speech for the youth group that was totally devoid of cheer lines. Of course, he says the writers don't know how to write cheer lines. Also he was concerned because the speech was written for the college level, rather than the high school level which these kids were. They're too young to remember the references



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in the speech to the '50's and '60's. He also has expressed some concern about the old folks speech for tomorrow, because there's a problem of nothing to offer them. No big ticket item that they'll really be pleased with. So we're not going to get a very favorable response, and he feels the speech they've done for him is going to lay a complete egg, but we'll see.

End of December 1.