

MEMORANDUM

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

Monday, February 6, 1967

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Lyndon and I and our little group left Camp David after an early breakfast, and the helicopter settled on the South Lawn a little past 9:30. It was time for work on mail and with Bess, and pointing out to Mr. West the sad fact that the beautiful draperies in the lovely Yellow Oval Room are disintegrating where they are exposed to the sun.

The first event of the day was the awarding by Lyndon of the National Medal of Science to 11 winners. They were already in their seats as we made our way into the East Room. Mature men all -- some of them quite old -- most from outstanding Universities. But one was from the Department of Agriculture, and one a Vice President of RCA.

Lyndon had said, "This medal serves as a symbol of the Nation's desire to recognize outstanding achievement, to set an example for our youth, and to depict to the world the depth and variety of American accomplishment in science and engineering. I hope that through these awards more Americans will come to recognize and to appreciate the wealth of talent in our midst, and the extraordinary progress which these people inspire."

Well, ~~their~~ very names said something to America, though just what it is I can't quite decide. There were certainly no Johnsons or ^{Lallier?} Smiths in the roster, but a Hasbrouck Van Vleck, Subrahmanyan Chandraeskar, Jacob Aall Bonnevie Bjerknes, and Vladimir Kosma Zworykin. *ck.*

When the brief ceremony was over we went into the Blue Room to shake hands with them and with members of the academic community

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who were guests for the occasion.

Their very citations were hard for me to understand, including such phrases as "absolute rate theory" and "magnetic and dielectric properties" and "insect vectors".

Finally someone came down the line who did explain that one of them had had a great deal to do with the sterile fly experiment which has changed the life of cattle raisers for the better in just a few years. So I began to have some glow of appreciation for their accomplishments even if I couldn't understand them.

Another person going down the line amazed me by having begun his schooling also at Southwest Texas State Teachers College!

We had sherry in the State Dining Room, and I asked Dr. Hornig to take me around and introduce me for a brief chat with as many as possible.

In the afternoon I worked some more on the mail, took a brief nap, had 20 laps in the pool, and then a shampoo and set. Lynda was waiting for the Earl of Bess^{Borough} -- an attractive middle-aged man she had met in New York at a party -- who was in town to be the guest of the British Ambassador. She had invited him to come by the White House to see it. And I was looking forward to meeting him. He had given her a book about his own centuries old house.

This last year Lynda has made some unusual friends -- collectors of old books, artists, movie stars -- an interesting variety, and all rather different from the life of her parents. Perhaps it is just maturing, perhaps

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it is some sort of revolt -- conscious or unconscious. At any rate, they are fun. But his plane was late and I was dressing for the big affair of the day -- the first of the Congressional receptions, so I didn't meet him

132 Congressmen and their wives -- the first in a series of six receptions -- ^{we} arriving at 6:00. It had begun to snow during the afternoon, huge white fluffy flakes, and the southwest grounds were a dreamy white and the glossy green leaves of Andrew Jackson's great magnolia were heavy with their burden of snow. But we decided to go ahead. We would never finish if we cancelled because of weather or votes.

We received in the Green Room and then had drinks in the Blue Room. People were a little late drifting in because of the driving from the suburbs. But by 6:35 I was upstairs with the ladies in the Queens' Room ready for our program for which Katie Louchheim was the moderator and four foreign service wives grouped around a table under Queen Elizabeth's ^{"our"} ~~oval~~ mantel piece, ["]chatted informally and very amusingly about their role of representing this country, from Togoland to the Court of St. James.

I introduced the program by comparing their lives to that of the Congressional wife. "They change homes frequently, they pinch-hit for their husbands and they weather crises."

There was Mrs. Joseph Palmer who got us off to a charming start -- leave it to a Southern woman -- by having recognized among the Congressmen's wives a school-mate of thirty years ago, Mrs. Stephens of Georgia. And

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there was Mrs. Allen Lightner and Mrs. Sherman and Mrs. Neger. There were vignettes, comic and tragic and just philosophical. My favorite one was when Mrs. Palmer was talking about her young son -- they had just come to some new African country and he didn't know the language. She was worrying a little bit about how he would get along in school and everything -- ^{how to make} ~~new~~ ^{Solicitously} friends. ~~Felicitously~~ she asked him, and he looked at her rather surprised and he said, "Fine." She asked him, "How do you make friends?" And he said, "Oh, momma, all you need is a ball. You just go out and you throw a ball against the wall or you bounce it on the sidewalk, and pretty soon somebody comes along and you throw it to him. And then they always throw it back. And then you just go to playing." He thought a minute and then he said, "Momma, ^{how} ~~why~~ is daddy getting along with all of these new people². Do you reckon it would help to get him a ball?"

I had done a little phoning beforehand to try to get the conversational ball rolling, ^{when} ~~their~~ 25 minutes of program was over, to Lindy Boggs and Lucy Moorhead and to Mrs. Ross Adair who founded all of the international clubs and is very interested in the diplomacy of personal contacts. So when the program was over, with the appearance of spontaneity, some good questions and stories began to come from the floor. There was a delightful one from Mrs. Ogden Reid, and an hilarious one from Mrs. Karsten which really had no bearing on foreign service wives, but a series of malapropisms like this has happened to nearly

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everybody in politics. It seems her husband was making a speech during a campaign. And when it was over a large bustling woman, a strong supporter, came up to him gushing and said, "Your speech was just wonderful. It was absolutely superfluous!" Congressman Karsten, a little bit taken back, said, "Thank you. I guess I will have to have it published -- posthumously." Thereupon the lady answered, "That's fine. I hope it will be soon." He declares it happened!

As soon as I detected a slowness in the momentum, I rose and thanked everybody and suggested that perhaps the new members and some of the old might like to see the Lincoln Room and the Treaty Room and our own living quarters. And the Curator, Mr. Ketchum, and I would be delighted to tell them about them.

Fresh drinks greeted us at the door, and we strolled down the hall and presently were down in the dining room about 8:20. The gentlemen joined us just a few minutes later. Apparently it had been a very good briefing.

There were two ladies present from my own old International Club, Betty Ford, its new president. She and Gerry are good guests, although he is a ~~cutting, slicing~~ ^{tough} opponent. And Mrs. Springer. They tell me that all the old diplomatic wives have moved on.

I chatted with Mrs. William Jennings Bryan Dorn and Mrs. Landrum and the Frelinghuysens and Jim Fulton and Nick Galifianakis -- a third

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member of the Greek group in the House now. Brademas was the first.

All in all, I thought it was a very successful evening -- ^{scarcely} ~~ghastly~~ a challenging salon, but a warm and friendly exchange among the women. And I kept on hearing words of praise for the briefing among the men.

// One thing to note. Don't have sliced roast beef for a standup buffet. It is a struggle to cut with a fork, and I kept on directing guests into the Red Room or the Green Room where they could sit down and at least eat off their laps. Many were leaning over the console tables. There were no knives on hand.

Another, I must ask the ladies and wives of Administrative Assistants to meet with me sometime this week to plan how each of us can talk with two or three of the members to help them feel at home -- or a part of it. And it is against the rules to talk to each other! //

I went upstairs about 9:30. Lyndon had gone just a little earlier. And by 9:45 the sounds of music died away. And I could chalk up one good one for the first of the six Congressional Receptions.