

RADIO SPEECH OF
HUBERT H. HUMPHREY, JR.

STATION WLOL

May 3, 1943

10:15 P.M.

Friends and Fellow Citizens:

In two previous radio talks addressed to the people of Minneapolis, I opened my campaign for the office of Mayor by discussing with you some of the major problems now confronting our city.

In those talks, I pointed out that Minneapolis needs, above all, vigorous and yet constructive leadership;

the kind of leadership that will unite our citizens in the present great war effort;

the kind of leadership that looks ahead and plans for a post-war Minneapolis;

the kind of leadership that is, above all, responsive and responsible to the needs and the wishes of our people.

I pointed out, moreover, that the Mayor's office in Minneapolis is suffering from a disease of do-nothingness. I indicated that the facts prove, in my opinion, and in the opinion of hundreds of you people who have been kind enough to offer your judgments, that the present Mayor of Minneapolis has been a do-nothing Mayor; an unimaginative Mayor; A Mayor who, however good his intentions, has been able to give Minneapolis only the most colourless, the most indecisive, the most mediocre type of leadership.

The present Mayor, I pointed out furthermore, has failed to act constructively in such matters as law enforcement, city planning, governmental reorganization and education.

Tonight, I wish to talk to you of another problem that is confronting our city, another problem about which our present Mayor has demonstrated a do-nothing attitude. I refer to the problem of crime among our youth; to the problem, that is, of juvenile delinquency.

I need not tell you that the future of our city and our nation lies with its youth. You know that already. Yet, it is important every once in a while to again remind ourselves of this fact. The strength of our city, and our state, and our nation can be no greater than the strength of our youth. This important truth makes

it imperative, therefore, that those of us who are parents and civic office, yes, those of us who hold political office, yes, those of us who are just plain citizens, must assume an obligation to our youth. We are obligated, each and every one of us, to provide for our young people the sound training and healthy recreation necessary to citizenship in a great democracy. The obligation, I say, falls upon all of us. But the responsibility for leadership in this task falls upon our city government, and particularly upon the Mayor's office. And that is precisely where leadership has been most lacking.

The problem of juvenile delinquency has, of course, been with us for many years. But, in the past two years, since the present Mayor has assumed office, the incidence of crime among our younger people has increased noticeably. A recent report, for example, published by the Juvenile Protection Committee of the Minneapolis Council of Parent-Teacher Associations, notes that officials of the School Board and Park Board and property owners in general "have expressed alarm about the serious increase in vandalism and the destruction of property." "Thousands of dollars of taxpayers' money", the report goes on to say, "is being wasted in the replacement of arc lights, broken school windows, and park board property."

This is only one of the many indications of the growing seriousness of the problem of Juvenile Delinquency. There are many others.

School teachers and social workers have told me, for example, that they notice more and more a growing restlessness among the children in our schools. They tell me, too, that the number of truancies from school are clearly on the increase.

Even more revealing are the figures concerning delinquency. In 1941, for example, there were 2100 complaints recorded against young people in our city. By 1942, however, this figure had risen to over 2600, an increase of 21 percent in one year.

Whereas 1044 cases were referred to the juvenile courts in 1941, there were 1216 last year. Here again is an increase of 15 percent.

Most alarming, however, is the increase in juvenile delinquency among girls.

There were 358 delinquency complaints recorded against girls in 1941. But in 1942, there were 603, an increase in a period of only one year, of almost 70 percent. Even more striking is the fact that the number of delinquency cases among girls actually referred to the courts was 79 percent greater in 1942 than in 1941. Cases involving delinquency of girls have increased particularly with respect to crimes involving sex.

It must be noted that these figures refer only to those cases which have actually been brought to the attention of the courts. There is no way of telling how many young people who evidence delinquency have gone unapprehended.

The delinquency problem is especially aggravated now because of the stresses and strains of war-time conditions. Fathers and older brothers have, many of them, gone off into the armed services, or into war jobs outside the city. Many mothers have patriotically undertaken jobs in war plants and related industries. This means that family supervision, so necessary to the training of young people, is now absent in many instances.

A report issued 3 days ago by the War Manpower Commission indicates, furthermore, that 59,000 more war workers will be needed within a year from this area of our state. Some 9,000 of these will have to be women. This means that there will be much less home supervision for young people next year than there has been in the past. It means too that we can expect an even greater rise in juvenile delinquency in the future unless our city government acts decisively and constructively now.

Our private welfare agencies have, most of them, been giving excellent and noble service to the elimination of delinquency among our youth. Yet, they are handicapped by lack of facilities and funds. Many of them have become understaffed because of the manpower shortage. This indicates also that now, more than ever before, the city's government, and especially the Mayor's office, must assume the responsibility of providing recreational facilities and supervision for our city's youth.

English experience in the last war and during the first years of this war,

as well as our own experience during the first war, showed clearly that juvenile delinquency tends to increase during war periods, unless government exhibits a conscious and determined effort to check it. It was the solemn obligation, therefore, of the present Mayor, who, after all, is supposed to know about such things - to undertake preventive action by way of anticipating and checking at the very beginning this potential increase of crime among our youth.

What did the Mayor's office do to solve this problem? The answer is: almost nothing. When the Mayor finally chose to act, it was, curiously enough, just two weeks before the coming election. He appointed at that time a huge committee, a 90 man committee, to study the problem of juvenile delinquency in Minneapolis. Most of these 90 men and women are, it is true, capable people, trained in social work and community leadership. But the Mayor must know, as well as you and I, that the problem of juvenile delinquency cannot be solved by large and unwieldy debating societies such as the present committee. To wait until the campaign period before taking a step against the problem, and to then appoint a 90 man committee, indicates that the Mayor intends to use the issue of juvenile delinquency for his own political purposes.

The problem of the future of our city's youth is too important to be ignored or to be used as a political football. For not only is delinquency destructive of community welfare, but it too often ruins the lives of the young people whom it touches, and prevents them from growing into well educated and social minded citizens. Boys and girls with delinquency records find it difficult to secure employment or to enter a profession. Many young men today, tainted by some youthful crime for which they may not have been wholly responsible, find themselves dejected and unhappy because our armed forces have refused to accept their services. Yet it is clear that these boys and girls are not inherently bad. They have gone astray because we, the adults of the community, have in some way failed to meet our obligations to them. And one of the most important of these obligations is the election of

governmental officials who will courageously and intelligently act to eliminate the causes of juvenile delinquency.

I propose that a realistic attempt to solve the problem of juvenile crime must involve the following immediate actions:

(1) We must first strengthen our police facilities through reassigning police officers to juvenile problems, and through specialized training in the character and problems of juvenile delinquency. Experience in this war, as well as the last, shows that crimes among people over 18 tends to decrease in war time, while those of younger people tends to increase. The reason is, of course, that men and women over 18 are drained off either into the armed services or into war industries. This means that a readjustment of our police personnel can be made without danger. If necessary, police personnel should be increased.

(2) The Mayor and police force must, secondly, make a determined effort to enforce existing laws, such as the curfew laws, the laws against commercialized vice, and the laws which forbid adults to contribute to the delinquency of a minor. These laws have as their purpose the prevention of crime among young people. Unless they are enforced, however, they are mere scraps of paper.

(3) Thirdly, existing social agencies must be re-enforced, and social welfare activities and services for youth must be expanded. Our government must aid our welfare agencies to carry on and expand the scope of their excellent work.

(4) We must, fourthly, open school facilities after school hours, so that our schools may serve the additional purpose of supervised recreation. City government must provide supervision, too, for playgrounds, boys clubs, and settlement houses.

(5) Fifthly, a special attempt must be made to establish supervised facilities, such as day nurseries and social centers for children of parents engaged in war work. This is necessary not only to curb delinquency among these young people, but to ease the minds of parents who, for reasons of war work, cannot carry on their normal supervisory functions in the home.

(6) Sixthly, we must encourage church groups to open their recreational facilities to young people. Many church organizations have been doing this for some time, and with notable success.

(7) Finally, the Mayor's office must coordinate the work of the various agencies which are concerned with overcoming juvenile delinquency. Such coordination is necessary in order that the areas of danger be determined and eliminated.

In my previous radio talks, I made certain pledges to the people of Minneapolis. I pledged that, if elected Mayor, I shall take the lead in uniting business, labor, professional and civic groups behind our city's war effort.

I pledged that I shall take the lead in the matter of planning for a post-war Minneapolis by attempting to implement the constructive and excellent suggestions of the city planning commission with respect to the expansion of our industries, and the guaranteeing of full employment to ourselves and to our boys returning home.

I pledged that, if elected, I shall appoint a committee representing business, labor, education, and other civic groups to study the present organization of our city's government, and to make suggestions for constructive reorganization.

I pledged, finally, that I shall concern myself with such problems as housing, slum clearance, the promotion of understanding between capital and labor, and the full utilization of the natural resources and beauties for which Minneapolis has become so widely known.

Let me add at this time a pledge that, if elected Mayor, I shall do my utmost to give effect to the 7 point program which I have outlined as a means of reducing or abolishing our growing problems of juvenile delinquency.

Fellow citizens, we can no longer afford to deal lightly and apathetically with the social and political issues facing our city. Americans everywhere are giving of "blood sweat and tears" that our democratic way of life might endure and move on to new heights of accomplishment. Your children and my children must not be made the innocent victims of adult indifference and immorality. The strength of

America, the hope of a future, rests in the youth of today. Let us here and now resolve to be worthy of the trust our children have placed with us. Let every mother and father do their part, and then let us demand that those men and women elected as our official representatives be courageous in their action; steadfast in their purpose. Total war leaves no room for inactivity and indifference. Daily we must renew our faith in God and country repeating our pledge to victory —

"We can, we will, we must!"

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The present Mayor, I pointed out ~~furthermore~~, has failed to act constructively in such matters as law enforcement, city planning, governmental reorganization ~~and~~ education, *post-war reconstruction, social & recreational developments.*

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P.T.A.

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The mayor must use all the power of his office to speed-up the allocation of federal funds for this purpose. We cannot afford to sit and wait.

(6) Sixthly, we must encourage church groups to open their recreational facilities to young people. Many church organizations have been doing this for some time, and with notable success.

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