

December 18, 1945

HHH:

This is the rough draft of your speech given
at the Andrews Hotel to the Engineers Club of Minneapolis on
December 14th, 1945, Friday.

D.A.A.

(File)
Humphrey Spusher

MEETING AT THE ANDREWS HOTEL, DECEMBER 14th, FRIDAY,
AT 12:15 p.m. LUNCHEON OF THE ENGINEERS CLUB OF
MINNEAPOLIS

Reporting on the U. S. Conference of Mayors held in New York City and solutions to civic problems of Minneapolis which can be carried out here.

Traveled with Mayor McDonough of St. Paul and want to stress the fact that St. Paul's problems are of concern in this city, etc. and cooperation of the Twin Cities in planning our government is essential.

Was very much impressed by the Police Department of New York City composed of highly qualified men who have held the ranks of Majors, Captains and Lieutenants in the service. In comparison, here in Minneapolis it is difficult to obtain an addition of forty men to our Police Department. Minneapolis is the most under-policed city in the United States for its size. We must increase our police force to meet the mounting crime record, which has resulted from the sudden ending of the war and the unpreparedness of the country to meet the ensuing problems that have followed. Because the Federal and State Governments contemplated that their next sessions would consider the post-war problems, it falls to the municipalities to face the difficult problems of today due to the shake-down after the war.

Every mayor is faced with the problems of housing, of crime, of reconversion, of civil service, municipal finance and necessary recruitment for additional personnel of municipal service. Other cities have much more serious problems on labor, housing, etc. than the City of Minneapolis. All these decisions must be dealt with, as once stated: "As Main Street goes, so goes the nation."

The atomic bomb is seriously being considered by the leaders in the nation and was discussed both at the Conference of Mayors and at a previous meeting in Chicago at the American Municipal Association where Mr. Worth promoted an idea of underground cities where we will be existing not living. We cannot talk discouragingly of lack of cooperation between Russian and American people when it is obviously difficult to bring cooperation between cities and counties, counties and states and states and the nation. Here in Minneapolis is a great need for consolidation of city and county boards.

Taxation is an immediate problem and it has become increasingly obvious that this country has never had a good tax program. Taxation has never been passed on the theory that it can be a program to destroy business but on destroying government.

There are thousands upon thousands of separate jurisdictions of authority without any idea or program of where we are going or what we are doing. It is city government's duty today to bring some semblance of order out of this chaos.

Dr. Emerson, after completing his survey, has recommended establishing Bureau of Occupational Hygiene. Recommended a documentary record of City's Sanitary Regulations be established.

Discovered at the Conference of Mayors that most mayors are just talking about housing in their cities and not doing much to solve the problem to date. The housing problem is not something that just came about after the war. It has come about long before the war and the United States was not the best housed country in the world prior to the war, when we were building 500,000 homes a year and should have been building one million. With the increase in marriages, births plus the deterioration of property and the return of three million married veterans the housing problem has become acute. These veterans do not want to live with relatives but want the privacy of their own home and the opportunity to live in a normal community.

Before leaving for the Conference of Mayors I wired to the senior and junior Senators of Minnesota, Representatives of the Third, Fourth and Fifth Congressional Districts and the President of the United States on the priorities being removed in October promoting commercial construction instead of residential construction and asking if we really are worried about housing. It is possible to stop commercial construction tomorrow morning and hold up every available material that we have. Because of the shortage of skilled laborer we must divert the necessary skilled laborersto residential construction also. Presented to the U. S. Conference of Mayors a housing resolution to that effect which was unanimously endorsed by the Conference and a telegram dispatched to Congress. Strongly against the President's proposal of \$10,000.00 limit on homes as men overseas four and five years cannot afford to pay \$10,000.00 as after twenty-five years they very likely could lose the home before it is paid for. Their ability to pay should be considered and \$10,000.00 for a five or six room home is not according to their ability to pay. Mr. Wilson Wyatt, former Mayor of Louisville, Kentucky, has been appointed as the new housing expeditor and it will be his job to get hold of material, break down the hindrances and handicaps surrounding the problem.

Here in Minneapolis we have a better start than other cities. A non-profit corporation has been established known as the Minneapolis Veterans Trailer Housing, Inc. with members representative of the Red Cross, Council of Social Agencies, Board of Public Welfare, an Assistant from my office and of the Federal Government. This corporation is bringing to the city trailers to be set up on property loaned by the Board of Public Welfare. Money has been subscribed by the Red Cross, which idea was taken up by other mayors at the Conference. No one is to occupy the trailers unless they are married veterans with one or more children as landlords have consistently refused to rent to couples with children working an undue hardship on these married veterans. The Mayor's Youth Welfare Committee is working out a recreational program, library facilities, religious facilities and educational facilities.

The Federal Government owns 100,000 temporary housing units. Wired our representatives that \$100,000,000.00 be set aside to use for these temporary housing units on the loading, moving and unloading. ~~THE~~ ~~XXXX~~ ~~XXXX~~ ~~XXXXXXXXXX~~ ~~XXX~~ ~~XXXX~~ ~~XXXXXXXXXX~~ ~~XXX~~ The City of Minneapolis will be able to get some of these temporary housing units. Don't want to convey

any misunderstanding on building as want to see the contractors well paid and the building trade to make a profit, but even with maximum production it will take three years to meet the present needs of the city which are 25,000 homes. Five thousand homes for five years would be a good building code for this City.

The federal government has a program to provide grade separations in congested traffic areas to facilitate the movement of traffic. The Federal Government supplies the money and it is up to the cities to carry out the program, such as making an agreement with the railroads. Minneapolis needs through streets at certain hours of the day and also permanent regulations of one-way traffic on Nicollet, Third and Fourth Avenues, for example.

To alleviate the parking problem the City needs to build municipal garages which can house 1,000 or 2,000 cars and if necessary seven stories with two or three below ground. The parking problem is going to become worse instead of better as Minneapolis is a great receptacle for visitors from out of the City and a great retail establishment city. Solution to the parking problem is of great importance to the City as we face the possibility of losing our downtown trade to the suburbs away from the district where big capital investments have been made.

Every great city that has great capital investments wants better living conditions and better than they have had before, which means more space per individual, not just better schools and homes. Minneapolis has natural beauty and fine streets, good schools with an excellent superintendent of schools and a high type of people in this community. Our skilled workers are the finest skilled workers in the country. We must work together to set up what Minneapolis is -- the Gateway to the Great Northwest. It can be one of the great Northwest terminals in the world in spite of Seattle. At the present time our Wold-Chamberlain Airport is far superior to airports in larger cities of the country. Visited Detroit and Milwaukee on return trip from New York City and want to report that Minneapolis can be proud of its airport and we are going to have improved facilities at the airport also. In the near future work is going ahead on the development of the Upper Mississippi and promotion of transcontinental railroads. We cannot live on the laurels of the past. We are eager to be the leader in wholesale and commercial fields between Chicago and San Francisco and we can be the leader. Plans have been drawn for the widening of Washington Avenue which will not only beautify the City but means for sounder economic conditions in the City.

The Mayor cannot do this alone and needs the cooperation of the City Council and civic leaders. The Mayor's office is not equipped to be the leader of the City and should mean more than just a glorified Chief of Police and being a member of thirteen or fourteen boards. Have suggested some proposed amendments for the City Charter to remedy this situation. The City of Minneapolis is not as bad off as some people portray it. Nevertheless, a comprehensive study of our taxation set up is necessary and a group headed by Dean Blakey composed of fifteen people are now making an objective ~~subject~~ study.

There is no Republican or Democratic way of running the Police Department just a police way. We have a good Chief of Police and want to state again that Office of the Mayor is going to do everything possible to rid this City of its iniquity through the Police Department which has its instructions. More policemen are needed to do the job. The public needs to make their voice heard by the Mayor and their Aldermen.



Minnesota Historical Society

Copyright in this digital version belongs to the Minnesota Historical Society and its content may not be copied without the copyright holder's express written permission. Users may print, download, link to, or email content, however, for individual use.

To request permission for commercial or educational use, please contact the Minnesota Historical Society.



www.mnhs.org