

Charles Farmer-318 North Washington St-Alexandria, Virginia.

stenographic transcript  
153rd "Farmer from Washington" broadcast

an off-the-cuff interview

with

SENATOR HUBERT H. HUMPHREY (Dem.-Minnesota)

over WMBG and affiliates  
RICHMOND VA.

Sunday February 24, '52.

For Release: SUNDAY 6 p.m.

Charles Farmer

(Tells radio audience of SENATOR HUMPHREY'S visit to Richmond in 1949, when he was guest-of-honor speaker under auspices of the Virginia Commonwealth League at the Mosque - an address broadcast by WMBG, etc. Then - )

...now Senator Humphrey - your friends - I hope I am among them - call you Hubert, in private conversation. But there's a chance - and it may be a good chance, too, - that this time - next year - we may be saying MR. PRESIDENT to you -

SENATOR HUBERT H. HUMPHREY

Well, Mr. Farmer, let me just call you Charlie. You have been most gracious and kind to even permit me to come on this broadcast with you, and to say a few words to our friends down in Richmond, Virginia, and over that fine radio station, WMBG...

Now you have really been laying it on a bit, Charlie, about my being a candidate for President. I want to clarify the record a little bit. In the State of Minnesota we have a Presidential Preferential Primary. I am a candidate within the Minnesota Presidential Primary. That is the only State in which I have permitted the filing of my name and a slate of delegates in my behalf. I expect that we will be successful in that primary and I am entering into the contest as a candidate primarily to solidify the followers of our liberal political party and to go to

at  
the convention as an active participant so that/the Democratic  
Convention we can again select someone to lead our Party that  
is pledged to the broad outlines of our liberal program and one  
that will stand firm on the platform which the Democrats assemble  
at the convention adopt.

Now I don't know what the platform is going to be. I hope  
that it will be as sound and as constructive as the one of 1948.  
Whatever the platform is, once that it is the resolved platform  
of the elected delegates to the convention, we are going to work  
in its behalf and we are going to support it and we are going to  
support a candidate for the office of Presidency that will carry  
on in the tradition of Woodrow Wilson, Franklin D. Roosevelt,  
and Harry Truman. I think these three great men within our life-  
time have proven to the American people that government is their  
partner and that government is their friend and that government  
is their servant, and not just to some of the people, but to all  
of the people. That is the kind of political party I believe in  
and the kind of politics I believe in. So let's put it this way,  
Charlie, if you are going to wait to call me Mr. President, why I  
am afraid you will just have to join one of the clubs of which I  
am a member to which I may get elected president. Right now my  
desire is to be a good, constructive, wholesome and helpful U.S.  
Senator. I like to represent my state here and I want to do it  
honorably, with respect and sincerity.

FARMER

(Recounts how at Democratic National Convention 1948 Senator  
Humphrey persuaded the Convention to over-rule a Committee, and  
adopt a strong Civil Rights platform @-at that time Humphrey not  
a Senator. Then - )

What about Civil Rights, today, Senator Humphrey?

SENATOR HUMPHREY

SENATOR HUMPHREY

Well, Charlie, I think it's time we had some frank and straightforward discussion on this Civil Rights program...Now, since I have been a United States Senator, I felt it was my responsibility and duty after having been very active in this civil rights program to introduce legislation to carry out the objectives which we have in the platform. I have eight bills before that Committee of Congress running all the way from the establishment of the Civil Rights Commission to the anti-poll tax, anti-lynching bill, fair employment practices, and other measures covering all the areas of civil rights activity...Now let's get the record quite clear as to the procedure we have in mind. There have been those who have tried to misrepresent this program. There have been those who said this fellow, Humphrey, has got a whole bag full of bills and he is trying to jam them down our throats in one lump. That, of course, is not true. Actually, any one of these measures is as important as another. As I said, there were eight of them. My feeling is that we start on any one of them. I have no priority. I care not whether it first be anti-poll tax, anti-lynching, or fair employment practices, or whatever it may be. Whatever may be the attitude of Congress in terms of getting a start, that is fine. I think the important thing in a democracy is the beginning. Once that we get underway in something, under a program, or behind a program, then we move along in a systematic, methodical, and constructive measure. I think that it is time that Americans everywhere clearly understand that civil rights legislation is more than a domestic affair. <sup>It has become an international problem.</sup>

## SENATOR HUMPHREY (continues)

We are faced with tremendous difficulties these days. Our boys, and our daughters, too, are dying on foreign battlefields for the cause of human freedom and human liberty, and in the Army of the United Nations and in our own army are men of all colors. There are Indian boys, Negroes, Mexican-Americans, Japanese-Americans, Chinese-Americans, and boys from every walk of life and from every race, creed, and nationality.

Only recently a wounded ~~NBY~~ Negro boy was given the Congressional Medal of Honor. He had fallen on the field of battle. He had demonstrated courage far beyond the call of duty. Now that kind of young man deserves recognition by his country by more than a medal.

What if he had come home? What if he had lived and he had come to an area where he was denied the right to vote after he had been a Congressional Medal of Honor winner? What if he had been denied the right of a job just because of the color of his skin? Now some people may say this is an exaggeration. It is not, because there are literally thousands upon thousands of people throughout America, not only Negroes, but in my part of the country, Indians, in other parts of the country Mexicans, in other parts of the country, Catholics, and other parts of the country, Jews, who are not permitted to have full privilege of citizenship.

I don't think America can beat down atheism, imperialism, militarism, and Communism when American democracy has a weakness in its shield called discrimination. We have got to come into the world with clean hands. We have got to be able to prove to the people of North Africa and of the near East in Iraq and Iran,



and of Asia and India, in Thailand and Burma that we consider them equals, that we believe in them, that we are willing to sit down around the conference table with them and treat them as equal beings, as human beings.

I am here to say that there is a revolution on in this world, Mr. Farmer, about human equality and unless America is willing to embrace the doctrine of human equality in its fullest meaning, we haven't any chance of saving ourselves. There are just too many people in the world who think that we deny human equality. Now we have made great progress and all I am asking is that we move along a little bit faster, that we make the changes that are needed so desperately in behalf of the survival of our way of life and of our freedom, and every one of our institutions.

PARMER

Thank you for that statement, Senator Humphrey...Senator, what about taxes, and the proposed Byrd budget?

SENATOR HUMPHREY

Everybody knows that taxes are high and I don't imagine anybody likes to pay them. That is a good, normal reaction. Taxes are high for a very simple reason: because our commitments are great, because the responsibilities upon this nation are almost overwhelmingly for world leadership, and for the fight to preserve our way of life. For example, out of the President's recent budget, 85 cents out of every budget dollar goes for national defense, foreign aid, interest on the war debt, and veterans' compensation. In other words, national security takes 85 cents out of every dollar. Fifteen cents out of every budget dollar goes for running the rest of the country. Now I submit

to you the reason taxes are high is because the world in which we live is a world which is sick and we are the doctor and we are trying to rehabilitate the cause of human freedom and preserve human life. Now I want to see this budget trimmed down as well as anyone else, and I noticed that ~~Recently~~ the senior Senator from your State (Byrd) made a proposal of cutting the budget down. I forget the total amount but I think about eight billion dollars. But even after that cut has been made, Mr. Farmer, there is still about a five billion dollar deficit in terms of the revenue as compared to the expenditures, so we don't get rid of the deficit even if ~~we~~ we cut eight billion dollars out of the budget. I notice that most of the cut was made in what we call civilian aspects of government and the economic aid around the world. The military was left pretty much intact. Now I believe in strong national defense. I always have and my votes have proven that. But I also believe that one of the major requirements today is economic assistance, because Communism is born in the soil of poverty, and it swarms where there is illiteracy, disease & pestilence.

The kind of program which America needs today is not just the strong arm of the military, but it needs the strong spirit and the will and the determination to eradicate from the midst of this earth and out of the soil of this earth the poverty and the pestilence and the ignorance which is the breeding ground for every kind of foreignism.. That is why I want my America to fulfill its responsibilities not only for military and political leadership, but for economic and spiritual leadership. I don't think you can do that by just wrecking the budget and by measuring everything by the dollar sign.

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*Washington - Script  
misc.*

WTIC

To be recorded 5/7 for use 5/9  
13 minutes--20 seconds

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Announcer:

Your Senator from Connecticut! Station WTIC presents another in a series of broadcasts in which--on Thursday evenings at this time--Connecticut's two United States Senators, William Benton and Brien McMahon, report alternately on matters of interest to their constituents. Tonight Station WTIC presents Senator Benton in a discussion recorded especially for this station. Senator Benton will have as his guest tonight Senator Hubert Humphrey of Minnesota, and now, Senator Benton.

Benton:

Good evening, friends and neighbors in Connecticut. One of the issues which has agitated every session of Congress in recent years has been the so-called FEPC issue. FEPC means Fair Employment Practice Commission. The FEPC bill would set up a Federal Commission to work toward the elimination of job discrimination. Job discrimination is the practice of hiring or firing employees because of their race, religion or nationality. Now this issue is coming up again. You may have noticed that one of the first questions asked of every candidate for the Presidency--when they are interviewed by newspapermen on the air is--"How do you stand on FEPC legislation?" That's a tough question--chiefly because the South is against any FEPC legislation with teeth in it,

and none of the candidates wants to alienate the South. I'm not a candidate for the Presidency—my candidate is Brien McMahon—but as a Senator I gave my answer this Tuesday. I testified before a subcommittee of the Senate Committee on Labor and Public Welfare, which is considering this FEPC legislation. The chairman of the Committee before whom I testified was Senator Hubert Humphrey of Minnesota. He is my guest tonight on this program. I am proud to have him. I am a co-sponsor of the FEPC legislation he has introduced. Senator Humphrey, I think our audience would appreciate it if you described briefly just what this FEPC legislation is.

Humphrey: (Describe legislation)

Benton: Senator, we really have two big issues here. One here at home is the issue of principle—the issue of simple justice, as you've stated it. The other is the effect this legislation would have on our international reputation. Two years ago this very day—May 9, 1950—in my second speech on the floor of the Senate, I said that:



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"Nothing the Senate could do today would be a greater blow to the Communist propagandists than the passage of the FEPC bill. Our failure to pass it will be exploited by the Communist propagandists as another mark of our weakness, as another evidence of our prejudice, and as another proof that we don't mean what we say and will not live up to the Constitution written by our forebears."

I asked my colleagues, what defect in America's armor or democracy contributes most to the poisonous effectiveness, the tremendous and terrible effectiveness of the Soviet propaganda? My answer then was and still is, our failure to live up to our democratic preachments on civil rights for all American, regardless of race, religion, color or national origin.

HUMPHREY:

(Comments)

BENTON:

Second class citizenship--our discrimination because of race, creed, or color--is a constant disgrace to our country. It is a heavy handicap in our efforts to win the minds and hearts of men throughout the world. At a time when we desperately need allies in the great spiritual and defensive fight against communism, we hold up before these very people <sup>we are trying to win over</sup> for example in Asia and the Near East--the unsightly spectacle of our racial and religious prejudice.

What is a yellow-skinned, or a ~~x~~ brown or black-skinned man to think when he sees negroes refused admission to theaters and restaurants in the alleged citadel of liberty and freedom, the Capitol of our country?

Communism thrives and flourishes on such food. Its propaganda mills grind out the stories and pictures of our discrimination. How are we to deny them--although they are often greatly exaggerated, and often downright false--how are we to deny them if they have a basis for credibility in our own shameful practices. Even when they aren't true, they sound true. Here is the genius of the propagandist: to seize a real weakness, to hammer it home and exploit it.

HUMPHREY:

(Explains that FEPC is not something new. FDR in 1941 established by Executive Order the President's Committee on Fair Employment Practices, prohibiting discrimination in war industries. This Committee was dissolved at the end of the war. Today we have FEPC legislation in 11 states and 25 cities. Explains experience in Minneapolis.)

BENTON:

(Explains arguments of opponents of FEPC)

HUMPHREY:

(Explains why they are wrong)

BENTON:

I am proud of the remarkable progress made by my own state. In 1943, we created the Connecticut Inter-racial Commission. Its job was to safeguard civil rights under our established laws and to develop better group relations in our communities. This agency is now known as the Connecticut State Commission on Civil Rights. It oversees our statutes which grant equal opportunity without discrimination, without segregation, or refusal in employment, in public education, in public housing, in service in our National Guard, in places of public accommodation, in voting, and in constitutional and legal rights.

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The Connecticut Fair Employment Practices Act, passed in 1947 by the General Assembly, declared that discrimination in employment on account of race, color, creed, national origin or ancestry is an unfair practice. It covers employers, employment agencies and labor organizations. It makes it illegal for employers to discriminate in hiring, in layoffs and discharges, or in terms, conditions or privileges of employment. It makes it illegal for employment agencies to refuse to classify or refer applicants for employment, and for labor organizations to refuse admission to full membership for reasons based on discrimination.

On the average, only something over 200 complaints of all types are filed each year with the Commission. After investigation, if the Commission finds some basis for the allegation, it attempts conciliation and persuasion. Only when these fail does it call for an administrative hearing, which in turn can lead to possible court action.

At the end of 1951, only 3 public hearings had been ~~necessary~~ necessary under the Connecticut Fair Employment Practices Act. In 1951 the first case in FEPC legislative history ordered a labor union to cease and desist from discrimination against negroes. It is now pending before our state court.

This remarkable record in Connecticut typifies the proper functioning of good FEPC legislation. It also refutes the cries of opponents that compulsory fair practices are a dictatorial sledge hammer over the rights of citizens to hire whomever they wish. Our operation proves that there is no such threat through FEPC laws.

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I must further point out that the Connecticut law embraces all employers who have 5 or more employees, while our federal proposals would exempt those employers who have less than 50.

Senator Humphrey, your analogy earlier in the hearings to a traffic law is a wonderful one.

HUMPHREY:

This law would be the same as a traffic light. The green light gives proper credence to obeying a good and just law. The yellow light warns of an impending violation by conciliation and persuasion. If, however, the driver finally goes through the red light, he must be stopped from repeating this wrong.

Just as the traffic violator must not be permitted to decide whether or not he is going to go through the red light, so one employer or labor union should not be allowed to discriminate while another voluntarily follows the principles of equality.

BENTON:

My friend and constituent, Elmo Roper, who is Chairman of the Research Committee of the Connecticut Commission on Civil Rights has stated that "discrimination against groups as groups is a disease, and it can be cured only by eliminating it entirely." He has declared that it "seems obvious to anyone who takes the trouble to examine ~~examined~~ even casually the psychological and economic costs of discrimination in industry that the price is simply too high to pay....", that "it is virtually impossible to really assess the extent of damage which is done by industry to itself and to minority group members each year from every standpoint."

Mr. Roper predicts that we are entering into a period of potential manpower shortages which will help force many of the industries that have followed discriminatory practices to hire goodly numbers of



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people against whom they have normally discriminated. He hopes that once these industries, through their need for men, are forced to break down these employment barriers, they will see the light and never resurrect them.

HUMPHREY:

Our present chances may prove pretty slim for getting an FEPC act through this Congress unless we can achieve cloture and prevent a filibuster. The present Senate Rule 22 makes a constitutional two-thirds vote of 64 Senators necessary if we are to pass needed civil rights legislation. The only change approved by the Rules Committee, and there is no present indication it will be approved the Senate, is a change from the constitutional 64 to 2/3rds of those present and voting.

BENTON:

How do we change the rule. If we cannot, where do we get the 64 votes. Let liberal leaders in both parties see to it the party conventions again dedicate both parties to civil rights legislation-- in terms no less ringing than in '48. Then, if we fail in this session--let us determine where those 64 votes are, early in '53. If we cannot get them, the time must shortly come when the Senate must face up to a prolonged filibuster, as disgraceful as such a spectacle would be in the eyes of the world.

Thank you and good night.

ANNOUNCER:

Station WTIC has presented another report from Washington in its series, "Your Senator from Connecticut." Tonight Senator Benton had as his guest Senator Hubert Humphrey of Minnesota. Next Thursday evening at this time your Senator from Connecticut will be Brian McMahon. Tonight's broadcast was recorded especially for this station. This is Bob Coar in the studios of Congress returning you to Station WTIC.

*HNN by - Wash  
Miss Radio*

WE THE PEOPLE  
TELEVISION PROGRAM  
JULY 18, 1952

I speak to you as a member of the Democratic Party.

We are meeting in Convention to determine the future course of our Party. The Democratic Party has earned the support of the American people for five consecutive election campaigns. My efforts in this convention are designed to see to it that our Party continues to merit the support of the American people. This means that the Democratic Party must continue to be courageous and honest, responding to the needs of our nation and the needs of our people. The issue of Civil Rights for all Americans symbolizing for me the basic integrity of the Democratic Party. Our Party must assert its abiding faith in the principles of ~~human~~ human brotherhood and human equality and our foundation stones of our democracy. We must make clear our opposition to discrimination on the basis of race, color, creed, or national origin. Discrimination which prevents people from equal opportunity of employment, from fully participating in our elections, and from being secure against violence must be eliminated from our society.

This is what we mean by civil rights, by FEPC, by anti-lynching legislation, and by anti-poll tax legislation.

An attempt has been made by the opponents of Civil Rights to confuse the term FEPC. I want to tell the American people that the Senate Committee on Labor and Public Welfare after weeks of hearings has reported out an equal opportunity in employment bill which has the support of leading Democrats and Republicans, church people, business groups, and labor organizations. It is a humane bill which emphasizes the techniques of conciliation which stimulate state and local governments to action and which makes full use of judicial process and fair hearings.

These are the facts. I am confident that a civil rights program has the support of the American people and I am confident that it will again receive the overwhelming support of the Democratic Party in National Convention.



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