

From the Office of
Senator Hubert H. Humphrey
140 Senate Office Building
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National 8-3120, Ext. 881

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Fifty years of change on the American scene has failed to erase the rural community and rural living "as the real backbone of the nation's moral fiber, and a strong bulwark of democracy", Senator Hubert H. Humphrey (D.-Minn.) declared today.

"Instead of weakening, the wholesome and constructive influence of smaller rural communities has grown and expanded as the nation progressed, becoming an important balance wheel in our entire political and economic structure," Senator Humphrey said in an address at the Storden, Minnesota, Golden Anniversary Celebration.

Senator Humphrey described Storden as "a typical rural American community, a trading center and social center for diligent farm people....a place where the climate for freedom is healthy, and the understanding of the real meaning of democracy is strong."

"Because all the people share in the community's problems, and take a personal interest in good roads, good schools, and good churches, democracy is a living thing in the small community, not just something out of the textbook," he declared.

Democracy needs such "personal participation", Senator Humphrey said, and needs the "common understanding of mutual problems, and mutual sharing of common responsibilities" found at its best in smaller communities.

"It isn't just a coincidence that is is from communities like this, and from surroundings like these, that have come most of the great leaders of our nation.... in the past and in the present," he said. "The strength of character moulded into men and women in such wholesome surroundings stands them in good stead wherever future destiny may call them".

There was a time when concern was felt that the great industrial revolution would sound the death knell of small communities, "drawing more and more people into the maelstrom of great cities where they become smaller and smaller cogs in the machinery of life," Senator Humphrey said.

But despite marked shifts in population, he added, "The wholesomeness of rural life and the friendliness of smaller communities has withstood the more materialistic lures of city life."

"Now, more and more people in our cities are yearning for the day when they might return to the simpler surroundings of their youth, or the day when some might find the peace of mind and soul they've never been able to achieve amidst the hustle and bustle of modern big city life.

"More and more young people are thinking soberly of the kind of surroundings in which they want to raise a family, and turning their backs on the cities for the moral advantages of smaller communities whenever economic opportunities permit."

Despite all the materialistic pressures of life, Senator Humphrey said, "more interest is being shown than ever before in the basic fundamentals of good, wholesome family life".

"More people want homes of their own, and more people have been able to achieve that goal.

"More people are interested in good schools, and more people are turning back to their churches as a refuge of strength at a time of storms in the world."

One of the "healthiest signs in our democracy today", Senator Humphrey said, is the "wave of new school construction under way, and the fact that churches are attracting their greatest attendance in our history".

Modern transportation and modern communication today bring the smaller community "all the advantages that might be offered in larger cities, without any of the drawbacks."

At the same time modern conditions require that citizens of smaller communities broaden their knowledge and understanding to problems of the entire world, "for your neighbor is no longer just in the next village or town -- he may be clear across the sea".

What happens in one part of the world affects the rest of the world today, down to the smallest rural village, Senator Humphrey warned.

"All we really need for a peaceful world today is for nations to learn to live and cooperate as neighbors, just as little communities have long since learned to live and cooperate as neighbors across the span of years.

"The problems of the world are no different than the problems of your own community, except on a larger scale. They are primarily economic and social problems -- the struggle for existence and survival, the dream and aspirations of a better life for all."



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