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The Townsend Plan For National Insurance

National Headquarters

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TOWNSEND FOUNDATION
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Max M. Kampelman
Legislative Counsel to
Senator Hubert H. Humphrey
Senate Office Building
Washington, D. C.

Dear Mr. Kampelman:

Enclosed you will find a copy of the address made by Senator Humphrey at our 13th National Convention.

We are sorry to be so late in getting this transcript to you, but we have just finished using this material at the office.

Sincerely,

George B. Fritz
Editor

GBF
JB

1 to him -- as so many are doing around over the country today
 2 -- as the people's Senator. We don't think any greater
 3 compliment can be paid any man in public office.

4 It is my pleasure to present to you the United
 5 States Senator from the great state of Minnesota, Hubert
 6 H. Humphrey.

7 SENATOR HUMPHREY: Thank you very much.

8 First of all, I want to thank that fine organ
 9 player. He knows that Minnesota song as if he came from the
 10 Gopher State. Very good.

11 Dr. Townsend, Bob Townsend, and, of course, my
 12 second girl-friend -- I have got to put my wife first -- Mrs.
 13 Ford is my second, Mr. Elliott, Dr. Gordon, the one and only,
 14 the great song master, and all of the delegates to this wonderful
 15 convention:

16 I have a great apology to make to you. I was
 17 supposed to be here on Tuesday. I came all the way in from
 18 Minnesota, having been out to Minnesota for a weekend trip,
 19 I arrived at the airport, and there was a long distance
 20 telephone call waiting for me, and my secretary said,
 21 "Senator, you just thought you were going to make a speech.
 22 You get back here to Washington. We are going to be doing
 23 some voting in the Senate today, and your job is to be here."

24 Of course, he didn't need to remind me of that, I
 25 knew that, and I got on the airplane right away and flew

1 back to Washington, but I could just as well have stayed
2 because these Senators, you know, we are long winded, and I
3 thought we were going to vote about 3 or 4 o'clock in the
4 afternoon, and we didn't vote until 11 o'clock at night.
5 You just never can depend on what is going to happen.

6 Now, in the House of Representatives, they have
7 different rules. They only speak there for five minutes at
8 a time, but by the time you get into the Senate, they figure
9 you ought to have a few privileges in life. A poor fellow
10 most likely hasn't had a chance to say a word at home, you
11 know, so when he gets in the Senate, why, he is entitled
12 to speak as long as he wants to.

13 Now, I want you to know we have one lady Senator,
14 too, so things are changing. You ladies are really taking
15 over, and we men know it, too. I am one husband that recog-
16 nizes that I am not the boss. I like to go around kidding
17 myself, thinking I am once in a while, but I really know
18 better than that.

19 How I regret that I couldn't be here for your
20 beautiful memorial service. I just happened to witness the
21 latter portion.

22 I have attended many Townsend meetings, as my
23 friends over there from Minnesota know, and I have a lot of
24 good fun with them, too, and I want to tell you, those Townsend
25 ladies in Minnesota are the best dancers in the United

1 States. Mrs. Humphrey and I have been out to many, many
2 of the club meetings during the time that I was Mayor of
3 Minneapolis. I regret that my work in the Senate
4 hasn't permitted me to be home as much as I would like to
5 be, but we have very understanding people in our state, as
6 you have in yours, and they know that the job of being a
7 Senator requires that you be on the job back at your post.

8 Now, that leads me to this: I have to catch a
9 1:05 plane out of here this afternoon. In other words, I
10 am going to spend four hours flying in the air in order to
11 give you about 25 minutes of a speech. Now, somebody might
12 have said hot air, but that isn't what it is going to be.

13 It is a great privilege to be on the platform
14 with Dr. Townsend. Dr. Townsend has been very kind to me,
15 kind in many ways, with good advice, with counsel, with his
16 spirit and his courage which is an inspiration to all of us
17 younger folks, but also kind in his friendship, and I
18 cherish that friendship, and I want you to know that his son
19 Bob has taken up in the footsteps of his illustrious father,
20 and I think it is just wonderful that the Townsend movement
21 has at the head of its organization a fine man, a fine
22 American citizen, a loyal devoted person to this country,
23 and to the humanitarian purposes of this democracy.

24 (Applause.)

25 I think it is wonderful, too, that his son walks

1 in his footsteps, and it is a great tribute to a father and
2 mother.

3 (Applause.)

4 And I say to you that the staff that represents
5 this organization in its legislative program is an honor and
6 a tribute to the quality and the character of the membership
7 of this organization.

8 (Applause.)

9 I have many contacts with Mrs. Ford, in particular,
10 and I would be less than frank and honest if I didn't pay
11 her a much deserved tribute for her dedication, for her pur-
12 pose, and for her very good efforts and results in the
13 nation's capitol.

14 (Applause.)

15 Now, I understand that this is known as the heart
16 beat convention. I think that is a wonderful title. You know,
17 we got a lot of people today that are placing emphasis upon
18 sheer force and materialistic power. It is good to have
19 people in America that think in terms of the heart and in the
20 best meaning of the terms of the heart, because after all,
21 this democracy of ours, this great citadel of freedom that
22 is our nation, is not loved throughout the world because we
23 have great armies and great Navies and great Air Forces. We
24 may be feared because of that, we may be respected because of
25 our economic power and our military power, but any friend-

1 ship that we have in this world, ladies and gentlemen, any
2 real love that there is for America in this world is because
3 America stands for something else besides wealth and power.

4 (Applause.)

5 This nation stands for fair play, it stands for
6 human decency. This great republic of ours, and all that it
7 means, stands for humanitarian purposes, for compassion, it
8 stands for what the great Christian faith tells us: Service
9 and kindness and goodness.

10 (Applause.)

11 And I have gone up and down this country preaching
12 this message. I used to say it in my classrooms. I say it
13 is impossible to understand democracy, unless you understand
14 its basic purposes, unless you understand its growth, and
15 this nation became what it is because it believed in God,
16 No. 1, and lived under the moral code of a great, divine
17 providence, and then practiced that code in its life.

18 (Applause.)

19 One of the things that has impressed me more than
20 anything else with the Townsend movement, beside its great
21 program, is the conduct of its membership, of the form of
22 its meetings, the loyalty to God and country, the religious
23 spirit and patriotic spirit that grips its membership and its
24 leadership, and these aren't things to be laughed off. These
25 are things to be admired and respected.

1 There is nothing wrong, you know, in one proclaim-
2 ing his religion, and there is nothing wrong in one proclaim-
3 ing his patriotic love for his great country. In fact, it
4 is definitely good and needed.

5 (Applause.)

6 You know, grass roots participation of American
7 citizens in this great democracy of ours is absolutely
8 essential. Washington, D.C. is the capitol of this nation,
9 to be sure, and I am privileged to be one of the 96 Senators
10 representing a great state, and a wonderful people, but
11 Washington is only symbolic. It isn't America. America is
12 California, and Florida, and Colorado, and Indiana, and
13 Arkansas and Washington, and Oregon, and Minnesota, and New
14 Jersey and Massachusetts, and all the states that are here,
15 plus the people that work. Let me give you one thought I can
16 leave in your mind today: Anything that the people of this
17 country will, anything that the people of this country
18 determine to do, that is good, wholesome, decent and proper,
19 anything that they set their mind to, they can get done if
20 they want to get it done.

21 (Applause.)

22 My friends, in my lifetime -- and I am not too
23 old, 42 this last May -- in my lifetime, I have heard people
24 say that we can never have full employment, and yet we are
25 busting at the seams today. In my lifetime I heard it said

1 that America had had its best days, and yet we are moving
2 ahead like a great locomotive. In my lifetime, I have heard
3 it said that we could never produce over a hundred billion
4 dollars of goods and services a year, and we are pushing
5 350 billion right now.

6 Of course, I am an optimist. Why shouldn't I be?
7 People that believe in freedom must always be optimistic.
8 You have always got to have courage. You can never afford
9 to have pessimism. You have to think of moving ahead.
10 Democracy is progress, friends; democracy is advance; freedom
11 is predicated upon the belief that human kind living within
12 the rules of society and with respect for God Almighty can
13 do the impossible.

14 Remember the Lord once said that, "Great things
15 I have done, ye shall do also." Don't forget that. This
16 isn't just talk, it is truth.

17 Now, what I am trying to say to you is: Don't you
18 ever lose faith, don't you ever give up the cause. What is
19 more needed today than anything else in any organization
20 that is dedicated to good purposes, as you are dedicated,
21 is the determination, the kind of determination that is wit-
22 nessed and testified to by this great man over here, Dr.
23 Townsend.

24 (Applause.)

25 And not only do you need determination, but you |

1 need membership, lots of it. You have got a good cause. You
2 have a wonderful organization. You have everything to be
3 proud of, nothing to be ashamed of. That is seldom true, you
4 know, in life.

5 (Applause.)

6 Now, what are you going to do about it? How are
7 you going to help some of us that want to help you? You know,
8 a political leader is no stronger than the forces that support
9 him. A movement is no stronger than its membership and the
10 will of that membership, and if you want to get better things
11 done, if you want pensions that are worthy of the name, if
12 you want to see to it that America's old people can live in
13 dignity and respect and decency, if you want to maintain
14 purchasing power in this country with a sensible program,
15 then go out and get some members. Get ten new members.

16 There is just one purpose for these conventions.
17 We don't need to get together in conventions like this just
18 to shake hands. We like each other. We don't need to get
19 together just to praise Dr. Townsend again. I know that you
20 are devoted to his cause and to him as a person. We don't
21 need to just praise the staff. Those are the niceties of
22 life, and, of course, it is always nice to hear good words,
23 because we hear lots of others, but the purpose of a conven-
24 tion is to mobilize your strength; the purpose of a conven-
25 tion is to adopt a program, and then proceed to get it done.

1 Now, that is the purpose, and the only way, my
2 dear friends, that this can be done, is out in your respect-
3 ive states and counties and communities. You can't advance
4 the Townsend movement just from Cleveland, as wonderful as
5 this great city is, as fine a state as Ohio is, the great
6 Buckeye State. They have a wonderful Townsend movement in
7 Ohio, a great one out in California, a great one in Minne-
8 sota -- we are proud of these organizations -- but let me tell
9 you this: That every day you either go ahead or you go
10 backwards. You never stand still, because the world is
11 moving, and the people that just want to hold on, the people
12 that just want to hold what they have got, dear friends, are
13 the people that lose everything they have. You have got to
14 move ahead, and you have got to be thinking in terms of
15 progress and increased strength and increased program, and
16 the will to carry it out.

17 I can say that the Townsend movement can always be
18 counted on, insofar as I have been able to see and under-
19 stand, as one of the great constructive forces in this nation
20 for keeping the human values of our democracy alive.
21 You know, our country has yet to fully realize the great
22 economic importance of maintaining purchasing power among
23 the constantly increasing ranks of our retired citizens.
24 I have been reading magazines of the plans that are being made
25 in the government to avert a depression. You know, friends,

1 don't you, we cannot afford another depression. That last
2 jag we had almost wrecked us. This country has too many
3 obligations at home and abroad, and there is no use in
4 talking ab out a depression, no use in even discussing it,
5 friends, because if it happens, it will wreck us, and I
6 don't intend to get wrecked, do you?

7 (Applause.)

8 I prefer to think of how we can save ourselves,
9 not just ourselves, for we have responsibility to people all
10 over the world, people just like ourselves, people that have
11 families and loved ones, people that have suffered, people
12 that have hopes and dreams, and they look to us, and isn't
13 it wonderful? Say, isn't it wonderful that we can help
14 other people rather than having to ask other people to help
15 us? Isn't it wonderful that we can serve?

16 You know, it is written that he who would be first,
17 then let him be last. It is better to minister than to be
18 ministered unto, and those are truths, ladies and gentlemen.
19 I only wish all of us humans would remember that. I don't
20 always remember them, I might add. I once said to a friend
21 of mine in the clergy that it is because of fellows like
22 me that we need ministers, because I don't always do every-
23 thing I am supposed to do. I know what I am supposed to do,
24 but like everybody else, I get off the beam once in a while,
25 but it is good to get back on the track.

1 Now, what I want to say to you is that if this
2 great country of ours is determined to maintain its great
3 position of leadership, its position of counseling and
4 friendship in the world, then we must be thinking in terms
5 of an expanding, growing, maturing America.

6 So I suggest that we look upon old age assistance--
7 if you wish to call it that -- if you look upon social secur-
8 ity, call it what you will, social security assistance or
9 pensions -- that we look upon it not as a gift to somebody,
10 not as a gift, but as an investment in the economic well
11 being of this great American economy.

12 (Applause)

13 You folks know these facts better than I do. You
14 read this great publication of yours, your weekly newspaper,
15 and it is a good one, excellent.

16 (Applause)

17 I only wish that some of the other newspapers
18 brought us as much sound economic and social information.

19 You know that we have got an ever larger number of
20 people in what we call our senior citizens. Modern medical
21 science and technology fixed it so we live longer now. There
22 is no use in living longer unless we are going to be able to
23 be somewhat creative and happy in our live. It would be
24 miserable, wouldn't it, if we had people live longer only
25 to have them miserable and impoverished and sick and unhappy?

1 So what is the job of men in government like my-
2 self?

3 What is the job of people in industry and labor
4 and all over America? The job is to figure out what the
5 facts are, No. 1, and the No. 1 fact is that we have a larger
6 number of people in our community every single year, at the
7 rate of a thousand a day, who are 60 or 65 years of age, or
8 older -- every year more and more. Now, if that is true,
9 then, we have to analyze what their economic status is.

10 The truth is that a large number of them, and I
11 made a note of that, some three and a half million of them
12 have saved no money through life, not because they didn't
13 want to -- but because it is tough to save money. Listen,
14 we know about that in our house. We have got four little
15 Humphreys, and I am here to tell you that it is not easy to
16 save money, and my wife can split a nickel right down the
17 middle with a paring knife. I am telling you that. She really
18 knows how to take care of them. She makes the clothes, even,
19 for the children, and she is a good sewer, and she likes to
20 do it. We are not broke. We live as good as most Americans,
21 and good enough to please the Humphreys, and that is good
22 enough for me.

23 Now, there are three and a half million of these
24 folks 60 years or older that haven't been able to save. There
25 is another two million who have incomes of less than \$500.00

1 a year, and another two million, according to your own
2 publication, that have incomes between \$500.00 and \$1,000
3 a year.

4 Now, friends, let's look at it cold-bloodedly for
5 a minute. While you have approximately thirteen million
6 people 65 years of age and older, and of that thirteen
7 million you have almost nine million who have no income at
8 all or under a thousand dollars a year, that is a challenge
9 to the American people, and it is a problem. We cannot
10 afford to have that many non-purchasers, non-producers. So
11 the whole pension system needs to be judged, not just in
12 terms of charity, but -- what do you mean, charity? Listen,
13 by the time you have raised a family, by the time you have
14 worked until you are 60 or 65, anything you get from there
15 on out isn't charity; that is just something you missed
16 along the way that you should have had. Now, let's get that
17 straight right now.

18 (Applause.)

19 I know there will be a few -- there are always a
20 few -- to whom that rule wouldn't apply. There is always
21 even a hypocrite or two in the best church. There is always
22 somebody, but you don't go around judging the whole of
23 America, you don't go around judging an organization by
24 finding one bad apple. You don't judge an orchard by finding
25 one plum that has got a hole in it. You judge by the main,

1 the overall.

2 What I am saying is that in the overall, when you
3 look upon insurance programs or pension programs, those are
4 not gifts to the American people, those are delayed pay-
5 ments. They are delayed payments and sound investments,
6 both in human life, but eventually in a growing economy.

7 As a younger man now with three boys and a daughter,
8 I want to be sure that those young people have a chance to
9 make a go of it in life. I want to be sure that they have a
10 chance for jobs. I want to be sure, if they are investors,
11 they have the chance to make a profit. You see, I believe in
12 those things.

13 I want to be sure that if they want to set up
14 their own little business, that they can make a go of it if
15 they work hard and apply themselves to it. I believe people
16 ought to do that. I don't believe in lazy folks. A man
17 ought to be willing to put his spirit and his energy into
18 the job, but if our society is going to have more and more
19 people of 60 and 65 years of age and older, and more of
20 those without any means of income, then what does it add up
21 to? It adds up to the fact that it just drains away from the
22 economy. It is a drag on the economy. It isn't a help, it
23 is a pull back.

24 So what do you do about it? Well, we started todo
25 something, but we haven't done enough. We think in terms of

1 a reasonable program of pensions and insurance payments that
2 makes it possible for those in the twilight of their life
3 to do two things: To live as human beings, as God intended
4 them to; and No. 2, to spend so as to be able to keep the
5 wheels of American industry turning, and that is darn good
6 business.

7 (Applause.)

8 Well, I will say this: That the Townsend plan pro-
9 vides the level of pensions which could truly mean purchas-
10 ing power, and here is a plan, friends, that includes both a
11 humanitarian and an economic purpose, and when you get those
12 two things put together, you are doing all right.

13 Now, what is the present scale of pensions in this
14 country, insurance benefits for old people? Think of it.
15 \$50.00 a month. Now, that is better than \$25.00, it is
16 better than \$40.00, but it isn't good enough by any stretch
17 of the imagination.

18 I will tell you what I have done. Many times I
19 have simply said this: "Do you know how you can get along
20 on \$50.00? How do you get along on it?"

21 When you have somebody that starts the argument
22 with you, just say, "Well, how do you get along on \$50.00
23 a month." I want to meet that person. That person could
24 save me an awful lot of money if they tell me that.

25 I said something like this yesterday -- and I made

1 a note of this -- in the United States Senate I made a little
2 talk there on these subject matters, and here is what I
3 said:

4 "In light of this terribly inadequate \$50.00, the
5 Congress has the responsibility to re-examine this problem
6 and to act intelligently and expeditiously to improve our
7 entire social security and pension program."

8 (Applause.)

9 Now, let me continue my quotation:

10 "In my opinion, no pension, whether it be from a
11 private firm, from government social security insurance,
12 from public old age assistance, or from any other source --
13 no pension is worthy of that honored name today unless it
14 provides at least a minimum of \$100.00 a month, and that is
15 a minimum."

16 And friends, I looked over the calculations that
17 have been charted by this organization, and I think I am
18 right, Doctor, when I say that on the basis of the 2 per cent
19 tax, with present national gross production, that the over-
20 all gross pension for all persons 60 years and above would
21 be an average of \$150.00.

22 Now, one other thing I made note of is that in a
23 period of rising prices, and sometimes falling prices, we
24 have cost of living increases. Now, look at it. If it takes
25 cost of living increases to keep a worker in an automobile

1 factory alive, it takes cost of living increases to keep people
2 that used to work in an automobile factory alive. You can't
3 have a status quo for a great number of people in this
4 country at \$50.00 a month, and have everything else running
5 up like a fever. It just isn't in the book, and it just
6 doesn't make sense.

7 Well, I said I'd try to rush along, and I want to
8 quickly rush along.

9 You remember when Henry Ford offered five dollars
10 a day. Well, listen, all the big boys in that time laughed
11 at him. They said, "This fellow, Ford." Why, the prophets
12 of doom just howled. They said industry would go bankrupt.
13 They predicted the country couldn't stand any such fabulous
14 steps, or any such fabulous wages, and then they said that
15 socialism is just around the corner if this happens. But
16 old Henry Ford just stuck to his guns on the theory that
17 workers were consumers, and never forget that, friends.
18 Modern American industry depends upon one factor in American
19 life above all else, more than it depends upon capital, it
20 depends upon a consuming public, because, friends, we have
21 built the kind of industry that is mass production. Our
22 kind of housing for example, is made for the millions, not
23 for the few. Our automobiles are made for the millions, not
24 for the thousands. Everything we have is in terms of one
25 hundred and sixty million Americans, plus some for other

1 people in other parts of the world. We have built the kind
2 of economy, we have spent billions upon billions of dollars
3 in building factories, and shops, and transportation systems,
4 everything that you can think of, billions upon billions of
5 dollars of the people's capital in doing what? -- in build-
6 ing a mass production, mass consumption economy.

7 And I want to say this as one who is somewhat of
8 a student of economics: That the minute that the purchas-
9 ing power of the American people fall s off, it doesn't hurt
10 just the consumer, oh, no, my dear friends, it hurts the
11 producer, and it hurts the investor, and it hurts the whole
12 nation, and when you hurt the whole nation of America, you
13 hurt the whole world today.

14 Now, we learned this lesson. I didn't have to go
15 to college to learn that. I lived through the depression.
16 I said a number of times I learned more economics out of a
17 few South Dakota dust storms and several years of depression
18 than I ever learned out of the textbooks that I studied at
19 the University.

20 (Applause.)

21 And I went through seven years of depression and
22 seven years of college, and I think I have got a little
23 idea now of what goes on, and I don't want to have to live
24 through another seven years of any kind of depression, and
25 I don't think we are going to have to, either, because we

1 have learned a lot, if we just apply it.

2 Well, I said Henry Ford had his people that laughed
3 at him, but, my dear friends, my, how many cars did he make,
4 and how many did he sell, and how many folks used to pump
5 along those old highways, but we got places, and today the
6 Ford Motor Company -- I only use that as one example, I
7 don't own a dollars worth of stock, I don't even drive their
8 car -- but I want to tell you something: They are doing
9 all right; they are getting by, and they got by because
10 they realized the first true lesson of a free enterprise
11 system, namely, production and consumption must go hand in
12 hand.

13 (Applause.)

14 Now, I have five minutes more, and then I am going
15 to have to quit. Now, let me give you my ideas of what the
16 eventual objectives of any real social security program must
17 be. These things are not new. My folks in Minnesota have
18 heard me say this so often, they say, "Why, that Humphrey
19 has got a broken record up there," but I will say them again.
20 I started talking to Townsend groups back in 1940 back in
21 Minneapolis, and I want to tell you I said then, and I say
22 it now, and I said it in the Congress of the United States,
23 so it isn't anything new to just this convention. I don't
24 have one speech for you, and another one for somebody else.
25 I am too busy. I have got to be thinking in terms of a

1 general philosophy.

2 Now, No. 1: We must provide for universal coverage
3 in all systems, whether in a national insurance or pension
4 system, wherein the costs are to be distributed in accordance
5 to the ability to pay, and one of the things that I liked
6 about the Townsend plan was the exemption in the real ^{low} ~~old~~
7 income group under \$250.00 a month, and then the uniform
8 tax, not soaking the rich, not soaking the poor, but treating
9 Americans as equals.

10 Now, the second thing is we must provide retire-
11 ment benefits high enough to permit higher standards of
12 living and keep pace with the change in the cost of living.

13 Third, we must provide safeguards for the hazards
14 in old age that too often and too quickly wipe out life
15 savings and more than deplete the meager incomes of the aged.

16 And fourth, we must eliminate restrictions on part
17 time earnings to supplement public assistance until, at least,
18 such incomes are adequate enough to make supplemental incomes
19 unnecessary.

20 I have advanced measures in the Congress like that.
21 There is nothing more tragic in a person's life, in the twi-
22 light of his life, when the grandchildren are with you, when
23 you have time to visit your friends and neighbors, than to
24 be stricken with a serious illness, acute or chronic,
25 temporary or long. I think I can speak with heartfelt feel-

1 ing about this. I had a wonderful, wonderful father, a great
2 man and a real dad, a real pal, and I saw my father terribly
3 ill, and I know what it cost dad, and I know how unhappy he
4 was about it. Money that he had saved up for my mother,
5 worked all of his life for, he spent over \$14,000 of it for
6 medical bills. Now, that is a lot of money, and mother
7 could well have used it.

8 Now, to me that is nothing short of a crime, because
9 I am of the opinion that when a person arrives at the twi-
10 light of his life, that one thing he ought to be reasonably
11 sure of, besides at least a moderate income, is to be able
12 to have at least modern medical science at his disposal or
13 her disposal. Some of us in the Senate have offered a bill,
14 just a beginning. You know, you have to start legislation
15 the easy way. I must be honest with you. It takes a lot of
16 time to make progress. You don't get all you want, but you
17 never lose your dream or your objective. It is like when you
18 are building a house. If you are a poor fellow, you build
19 a house that you can expand. You may want a four bedroom
20 house, but you only build a two bedroom house, because you
21 don't have enough money, but you leave the plans so you can
22 get a four bedroom house, and then maybe you will fix up the
23 basement later and add a garage, and that is the way most
24 people have to live. Nothing wrong with it. It gives you
25 a lot of work to do, it gives you a lot of ambition.

1 So I say, we have introduced -- Senator Lehman
2 of New York, and Senator Murray and myself, we have introduced
3 a bill that would apply to the present social security pro-
4 gram, that anyone who is on old age assistance, that anyone
5 who is receiving old age insurance pension, that they would be
6 entitled to 60 days free hospitalization as a part of their
7 social security benefits.

8 NOW, the money is there to do it. The money is
9 there to take care of that, and what is more, isn't it
10 better to have it come as a matter of right rather than to
11 be compelled to go to the county or to go to the town board,
12 or to go to the state institution? Pick your own hospital
13 and go like anybody else. Pick your own doctors, and have
14 the kind of doctor that you want, not that somebody orders
15 you to have. I believe in free choice of doctors and free
16 choice of hospitals. I want that. I don't want somebody tell-
17 ing me who is going to take care of me, and I don't want some-
18 body telling me, "You have got to go to this hospital."

19 If I want to go to any hospital, I want the right
20 to go there, and I want the right to select my own doctor.

21 (Applause.)

22 This is not an idle dream, friends. This can be done.
23 It can be done if we will it to be done. A country that can
24 do what we have done internationally, a country that can help
25 win two wars, a country that can spend hundreds of billions of
dollars in the post war period, this country can do what it

1 wants to. This program would cost peanuts compared to what
2 we spend, and it would be done for what purpose? To protect
3 the lives of people; to protect their homes and their well
4 being.

5 So let's get the job done.

6 Now, as I leave you, friends, may I assure you that
7 this Congress, I regret to say, is not as sympathetic to
8 our objectives as I would like it to be. I am not going to
9 talk partisan politics, you didn't ask me to do that. Out
10 there there are people of all different political parties,
11 and after all, there are all kinds of people and political
12 parties. We have as much trouble within each party as we
13 do between them, I have learned that. I think it is time we
14 started being very honest with each other. You vote the way
15 you want to -- I am not going to tell you that -- but I
16 suggest that you ask people that you may want to support just
17 how they stand on some of these matters. I'd suggest that
18 you look out for your own well being a little bit, or the well
19 being of your neighbors, and I suggest that you check back
20 and see what they have done when they have had a chance to
21 vote.

22 Now, one thing I have noticed in Congress is that you
23 vote only two ways; yes or no. Yes, if we could vote "maybe"
24 everybody would love us, but there are no maybe votes, and
25 when the roll is called up yonder or down in Congress, you have

1 got to answer, and you have got to answer yes or no, and
2 you can check the record and find out where your friends
3 are. I am pretty proud of the fact that seven out of the
4 nine Minnesota Congressmen signed that discharge petition.

5 (Applause.)

6 Let me say they didn't all want to sign it. Oh,
7 no. Some of them you had to drag in by the feet. You know
8 why they signed, some of them? Because the Townsend clubs
9 out in the state of Minnesota have been doing some work on
10 them, and that is the way you get it done.

11 (Applause.)

12 Now, you don't do work by threatening people be-
13 cause you don't have that many members. You do it by
14 persuasion, by education, and by information, and by your
15 steadfastness of purpose. So let's keep it up. Beware of
16 some of the studies that go on too long. Now, I am for
17 studies, don't misunderstand me. You have got to study any
18 problem, but my good friends, the Doctor knows that we in
19 Congress have done a lot more studying than we have legis-
20 lating. Now, I am perfectly willing to give studying
21 another whirl, but as I said the other day in Congress, study-
22 ing reminds me of going to school, and when you go to school,
23 you have to pay what we call tuition, and I only hope that
24 the studies that we are making now won't be too expensive in
25 the cost of tuition or education of the American people.

1 There are certain things that can be done right
2 now. Right now we can increase certain benefits; right now
3 we can increase the coverage; right now under the present
4 system, we can give this medical care; right now we don't
5 need another study. Everybody knows about that. You don't
6 have to go to Harvard to figure that one out. That is al-
7 ready here.

8 (Applause.)

9 All I am saying to you is keep your eye on the
10 ball, make up your mind what you want, ask yourself, "Is this
11 good for the country or is it just good for me?" If it is
12 just good for you and not for the country, then, of course,
13 ought not to have it, but if it is good enough for the whole
14 nation, if you can justify it in terms of the whole economy
15 and the whole well being of our people, then go out and
16 fight for it, and you have to fight hard.

17 I just got a little note here. It says, "A bill to
18 extend and improve the old age and survivor's insurance sys-
19 tem to provide permanent and total disability and re-
20 habilitation benefits."

21 There are ten of those bills introduced in the
22 house of Representatives, and they are introduced by such
23 men as Congressman Dingle, Congressman Bolling, Congressman
24 Roosevelt, Zeller, Elliot and Howell, Rhodes and Shelley, and
25 others.

1 Now, they are all identical; those bills are in
2 the House Ways and Means Committee, and as you know, you
3 have to get some action in that committee.

4 Well now, I have got to run. I have got to get
5 going. Dr. Townsend is going to drag me right off this
6 stage. He told me that I have to get back to Washington,
7 that I'd have to cast a vote this afternoon, and as I say,
8 even if it takes four hours and thirty minutes just to speak
9 30 minutes, I think it was all worth it, as far as I am
10 concerned.

11 ...Applause...

12 CHAIRMAN HAREN: Just like I told you, ladies and
13 gentlemen, the people's senator, Hubert Humphrey from
14 Minnesota.

15 ...Announcements...

16 CHAIRMAN HAREN: We will recess until 1:30 this
17 afternoon.

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COPY
June 22, 1953

Mr. Charles W. Wetterman
National Club Manager
Townsend Plan for National Insurance
6875 Broadway
Cleveland, Ohio

Dear Mr. Wetterman:

I am enclosing a copy of a release which we have prepared covering my participation in your National Convention. I understand that this is acceptable to you too as an "advance" on my speech. I shall assume that you will handle the publicity from there. Thank you very much for your kindness. You are certainly doing a fine job of organizing your Convention, and I do look forward to my visit with your delegates.

Sincerely yours,

Hubert H. Humphrey

From the Office of
Senator Hubert H. Humphrey
140 Senate Office Building
Washington 25, D.C.
National 8-3120, Ext. 881

FOR RELEASE
Tuesday, June 30, 1953 - P.M. Papers

Any old age pension upon which people are expected to live, "whether from a private firm, government social security insurance, public old age assistance, or any other source", should provide a minimum of at least \$100 per month, Senator Hubert H. Humphrey (D.-Minn.) declared this afternoon.

Addressing the Thirteenth National Townsend Convention at Cleveland, Ohio, Senator Humphrey sharply criticized the present levels of old age benefits under social security and public old age assistance and challenged:

"Can anyone say the \$50 a month is enough to live on today?"

America's "awakening sense of humanitarian justice" during the past twenty years has laid the foundation for greater aid to the aged, even though "we still have a long way to go" in achieving real social security, Senator Humphrey said.

As "eventual objectives" of social security he listed:

1. Universal coverage of all citizens, under a national system where everyone shares in the costs in accordance with ability to pay.
2. Retirement benefits high enough to permit decent living standards, keeping pace with changes in living costs...and "not less than \$100 per month".
3. Safeguards such as prepaid hospitalization insurance to cover the added health and accident hazards of old age.
4. Elimination of restrictions on part-time earnings to supplement insurance benefits, "at least until such benefits are adequate to make such supplemental income unnecessary".

Senator Humphrey said he was confident America would move steadily forward toward those goals, both as a matter of humanitarian concern for the aged and as a means of maintaining high purchasing power throughout the economy.

While increased public attention and concern over the hardship burdens of the elderly has led to widespread acceptance and support of more adequate aid to the aged as a matter of "humanitarian justice," Senator Humphrey said, "not enough consideration has been given to the economic aspects of pensions".

"Our country has yet to fully realize the tremendous economic importance of maintaining purchasing power among the constantly increasing ranks of retired Senior Citizens.

"We can't long maintain a dynamic, expanding American economy if we have in our midst a constantly growing group of people deprived of an opportunity of sharing in our economic progress, and only barely able to exist on present meager allowances from social security insurance," Senator Humphrey warned.

"Considerable concern is being shown behind-the-scenes in Washington these days, about dangers of a recession in our economy," he said. "It's no secret that the White House has had advisors at work trying to develop plans for keeping our economy on an even keel, in event of a Korean truce and a future easing off of demands for heavy defense expenditures..."

"If the Administration is groping for a way to keep our economy at high levels, and ward off another depression, where better could they turn to keep the wheels of industry spinning than by putting greater purchasing power into the hands of our Senior Citizens?"

All social progress, Senator Humphrey said, was "an uphill fight that must be led by people with vision, courage, and devotion to humanity -- seasoned with a dash of practical realism about the political facts of life."

"We must realize we can't achieve all we might desire overnight. We've learned from experience that most social progress is a step-by-step process, overcoming obstacles one at a time and winning public acceptance by proving the worthiness of our objectives.

"Despite all the weakness and shortcomings in the present Social Security Act -- and I know there are many -- it has been a tremendous victory in bringing about public acceptance of the principle of national insurance as a means of providing for the aged.

"Our most immediate task now should be to safeguard these principles from being undermined by those who would destroy social security altogether, while we are working for every improvement we can get".

Among such improvements, Senator Humphrey urged "first priority" for inclusion of prepaid hospitalization benefits to qualified insurance and pension recipients, for which he is co-sponsor of a bill with Senators Murray and Lehman. Senator Humphrey also reviewed other measures he has introduced in the present session of Congress to further liberalize social security benefits and eliminate some of the present restrictions, calling upon the Administration for "more than lip service" toward making good its campaign promises of social security improvements.

Senator Humphrey warned the convention "not to be confused" by some proposals hiding behind the attractive idea of pay-as-you-go "improvements" in the present social security laws.

Some big taxpayers are attempting to shift the burden of old age assistance entirely from income tax rolls to payroll taxes, he warned, "easing the load on those most able to pay and increasing it on those less able to pay".

"I'm as interested as your organization is in having a sound, pay-as-you-go social security program," Senator Humphrey said. "I want to see social security pay its own way, and see the funds collected used for decent social security benefits.

"But I don't want to see social security reserves weakened and watered down to where the entire program can be destroyed in the future. And I don't want to see the big taxpayers of the country shifting their share of the burden and responsibility off on the little fellow, behind some cleverly worded scheme."

Senator Humphrey lauded the Townsend movement for "pioneering the way for sounder economic security for all our citizens", and said it would have been impossible to have made what social progress has been made to date in the field of more adequate care for Senior Citizens if it had not been for "concerted, continued efforts of organized groups to awaken the conscience of America, and stir up its inherent sense of human justice".

"You must expect an uphill battle, and you must expect obstacles to be thrown in your course," Senator Humphrey said. "That's been the history of all social progress. You must expect, too, that attempts will be made to confuse you and deceive you, as well as the rest of the people..."

"For some time, there has been a determined effort to make American people believe that they can't have both liberty and security at the same time -- that they must sacrifice one for the other.

"I deny that idea, completely. Anyone trying to tell you that simply fails to understand the real concepts of security and liberty, or is deliberately trying to deceive you.

"I'm for a positive idea of liberty that means equal opportunity, rather than any negative idea of liberty in the sense of being let alone.

"In our modern democratic society, the positive idea of liberty must prevail. The negative idea of liberty -- the idea that liberty means just being let alone -- would mean little more than creating ' a state of ragged individualism, with everyone having the right to work out his own destitution!."



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