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SENATOR HUMPHREY SAYS INTERNAL PROGRESS CONCERNS ISRAEL MORE THAN EXTERNAL FOES

"Absorbing an estimated 100,000 new immigrants this year is a practical problem of more immediate concern to the State of Israel than relations with her Arab neighbors," Senator Hubert H. Humphrey (D-Minn) told a Combined Jewish Appeal audience in Chicago last night. Senator Humphrey, a member of the Foreign Relations Committee, and Chairman of the Subcommittee on the Middle East, has just returned from Israel, Lebanon, and Egypt.

In a report on his two-hour visit with Prime Minister Ben-Gurion, the Senator emphasized that the Israel statesman spent little time in discussing foreign affairs. "Ben-Gurion who typifies so much of his people's dedication, drive and spirit of confidence, spoke again and again of his great responsibility of providing homes, subsistence and jobs for the new wave of immigrants. Fortunately a good many of them are again coming from Eastern Europe and include a high proportion of skilled workers and technicians. But the numbers are great, and the social, political, linguistic and cultural complications are many."

"Ben-Gurion spoke imaginatively and vigorously about Israel's growing economy and particularly about plans for developing the Negev," Senator Humphrey continued. "There is no doubt in his mind that Israel's great southern desert can be made productive through irrigation. There lies the single most hopeful element in Israel's ability to absorb its increased population. Israel's Prime Minister said that his country needs two things badly -- tillable land and capital. Reclaiming the Negev will go a long way toward providing the former", Senator Humphrey commented. "The Capital requirement

remains to be supplied, partly through self-generating productivity in Israel and partly through direct outside aid.

"A people and a government that have demonstrated their capacity to pioneer in the development of new democratic institutions, to open new opportunities for people from many lands, to develop, to sacrifice and to share -- such a people and government are worthy of our confidence, friendship, and assistance. The people of Israel are convinced that they have a great future. They already have a deathless and memorable history. What Israel needs now," Senator Humphrey concluded, "is the dedicated faith and practical help of her friends."



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