

By file:
News Release

CITIZENS COMMITTEE FOR THE HOOVER REPORT

RELEASE: IMMEDIATE

777 Fourteenth Street, N. W.
Washington 5, D. C.

Louis J. Burns, Jr.
ADams 4-0700, Suite 700-B

*File
in folder on Citizens Comm
Hoover Comm
SP.*

SENATOR HUMPHREY SAYS HOOVER COMMISSIONS ROUSED PUBLIC INTEREST

WASHINGTON, D.C., MARCH 31 -- U. S. Senator Hubert H. Humphrey (D.-Minn.) today praised the two bipartisan Hoover Commissions for arousing public interest in the activities and problems of the Federal Government.

Senator Humphrey's address highlighted a welcoming luncheon opening a two-day "Climax Drive Conference" of the Citizens Committee for the Hoover Report at the Shoreham Hotel.

The Senator was unable to attend the luncheon, and his speech was read by Mr. Miles Scull, Jr., a member of the staff of the Senate Committee on Government Operations. Senator Humphrey heads the Committee's Subcommittee on Government Reorganization.

Senator Humphrey said the upturn in public interest in the Government was "in all probability, the greatest contribution the two Hoover Commissions have made to this nation -- possibly greater than if all their recommendations for improving the Government's operations had been enacted into law."

He added:

"For this the nation owes a debt of gratitude to former President Hoover, to his associates on the Commissions, and to you."

(more)



Senator Humphrey said the importance of active citizen interest in government affairs is greater now than ever before. But he warned against criticism "for criticism's sake," and noted that despite certain failings the Federal Government represents the free world's strongest hope for the future.

Two other Members of Congress addressed the Citizens Committee in "workshop sessions" today. Senator H. Alexander Smith (R.-N.J.) discussed the need for reform in the Government's medical programs, and Representative Charles B. Brownson (R.-Ind.) urged a unified supply system in the Defense Department.

Another speaker, Dr. Arthur S. Flemming, former Director of the Office of Defense Mobilization, stressed the importance of modernized personnel practices in the Government.

C L I M A X D R I V E W O R K S H O P

Sponsored by
CITIZENS COMMITTEE FOR THE HOOVER REPORT
Hotel Shoreham, Washington, D. C.
March 31-April 1, 1958

Estimated time of delivery:
Luncheon, March 31, 1958

Remarks of
SENATOR HUBERT H. HUMPHREY OF MINNESOTA

I am, indeed, delighted to take part in this public spirited assembly today.

Your presence here at this Citizens Committee Workshop is most stimulating. This gathering is first-hand and, I may say, most heartening evidence that our government is a dynamic thing and that you as citizens have a dynamic interest in it.

Also, this occasion presents me with an opportunity to which I have long looked forward: That of discussing a subject which is very close to my heart -- "The Citizen's Responsibility for Good Government" -- and, perhaps, of shedding a little light upon a few other things along the way.

At no time since the founding fathers forged the Constitution upon which this great Republic rests has government been of greater importance to us. Not only America, but the free peoples of the World, look to our government for leadership as the universe crosses the momentous horizons of the Space Age where man holds in one hand the lighted torch of miraculous human progress and in the other the awesome power to destroy himself with the hydrogen bomb.

Whether mankind holds high the lighted torch of progress as he crosses the threshold of space or whether he smashes everything for which civilization stands in a maddening maelstrom of nuclear warfare hinges greatly on government's

leadership in these fateful days of danger, decision and crisis. And -- nowhere does the responsibility for government's leadership lie more heavily than on the individual citizen.

For in a Democracy the course government takes, the power good government wields, the strength with which it arms itself and the principles of liberty, justice and freedom for which it stands all depend upon the will, the strength, the courage and the willingness to sacrifice, if need be, of its individual citizens.

In the final analysis the citizens of America are the government -- the invisible power, strength and force for good that is behind the portals of the White House, the marble columns of the Capitol Dome and of which the American flag is the shining symbol. No responsibility they bear is greater than that -- to their country.

I suppose it could be said the citizen's responsibility to his government begins with that precious privilege -- the right of franchise. It is at the ballot box in the country school house that the caliber of government is initially determined when the citizen votes for his elected representative to carry out his wishes -- at the Town Hall, at the State Capitol or in Washington.

If the citizen makes a conscientious choice, if he persuades good, public-spirited candidates to stand for office, and if he himself knows what the issues are, he discharges his responsibility properly. If he does not -- or if he "Let's John do it" -- as many do, he not only fails to exercise a precious right, he fails to perform a duty he owes to himself, to his family, and to his country. He cheats himself and them.

Along with the right of franchise goes the responsibility of knowledge -- knowledge of government, knowledge of candidates, knowledge of issues.

No longer is the day when the citizen at the crossroads can look upon the federal government as a distant authority at "Washington City" which, in some vague way, looks after his national interests, as was the case fifty years or so ago.

Today the federal government's influence is everywhere, in the states, in the cities, in the towns, on the highways, in the airways, in the Main Street bank, in the country store, affecting his life in a hundred different ways every hour of the day every day of the year.

Thus -- the responsibility of knowledge -- in today's era of expanding governmental activity and influence is imperative -- for without knowledge, judicious exercise of the ballot is futile.

In my opinion -- the spreading of knowledge -- the dissemination of information -- the stimulating of interest in government has been, in all probability, the greatest contribution the two Hoover Commissions have made to this Nation -- possibly greater than if all their recommendations for improving the government's operations had been enacted into law.

For this the Nation owes a debt of gratitude to former President Hoover who headed up that great work, his associates on the Commissions and to you.

Again, at no time in history -- other than when our forefathers were bringing forth a new Republic of free men at Constitution Hall in Philadelphia -- at no time, I say, has there been a greater interest in government than there exists in the United States today. From the FTA meeting -- to the City Council -- to the State Capitol and on to the Halls of Congress -- there is a tide running strong for better government, more efficient government and more economy in

government -- and significantly, I think, for less government, as the Hoover Commissions proposed in some of their reports.

This is all to the good. For the more that the governed are aware of their government, the more knowledge they possess of its operations, the more alert they are to its inescapable frailties, the greater their voice is going to be heard, the greater their influence is going to be, and the better their government is going to be.

Although it is an old cliché, it nevertheless is true, representatives of the government, appointed or elected, are very sensitive to the people. -- As one, I can tell you that is so.

However, a "crusade" for better government, such as that which has followed the Hoover Commissions' reports, to succeed must be conducted in a framework of reality -- based upon fact. I would offer a gentle rebuke to any who criticizes for criticism's sake only, or who makes false promises beyond the realm of reality. -- These techniques accomplish nothing -- as a matter of fact, they do grievous damage to the cause we all espouse.

I, for one, am proud, very proud, of my government. I know the Constitution to be the greatest living document by which men rule themselves of all the ages. I believe that the framework within which our government operates is as sound as the proverbial "Yankee" dollar of which we are so proud. I also believe that the very great majority of the people who work for the government are loyal, hard-working, patriotic citizens who give a dollar's worth or more for every dollar they are paid.

Oh, I know today's government has its shortcomings, its weaknesses, and, at times, its failures. But -- my friends, so does any human enterprise of its magnitude, fraught with the crises that today's world presents, besieged by a foreign ideology which seeks to conquer it, at times torn apart by political dissension -- yet, still standing like the Rock of Gibraltar, shining like a beacon to free men the world over -- strong, vigorous, ready to face whatever uncertainties a troubled future might bring -- in truth the greatest government the world ever has known.-- I ask you -- would you trade it for any other?

The weaknesses we seek to shore up. The shortcomings to correct. The failures not to repeat. But, let us go about this with reality. Let us not endanger the house because grease is burning in the kitchen oven. Let us not condemn all government because grievous mistakes have been made or a part here or there has failed us.

To be sure, let us correct that which has failed, but let us look upon the whole not the part and to the future not the past. And let us march forward solidly, together to build the whole ever greater and stronger.

My friends, only by doing this can we hope -- as the leaders of the free world -- to succeed -- or to survive.

Thank you.

4/3

vii:

Maybe the

Senator

would give

to see

this.

Wider, Sull



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