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THE CHALLENGE OF LEADERSHIP

A Convention Message to  
My Fellow DFL'ers from

SENATOR HUBERT H. HUMPHREY

Once again we are gathering for our DFL Convention. We can meet with pride in our achievements, our growth, and our successes -- but at the same time we must recognize the sobering responsibilities of sound and mature political leadership.

It is not enough to be critical of the weaknesses and failures of Republicans.

It is not enough to decry the collapse of our prestige abroad, and the wavering confidence in our economy at home, as necessary as it may be to alert the American people to the dangerous price we are paying for Republican muddling and ineptitude.

Actually, the American people know these shortcomings without our having to constantly remind them.

They see these shortcomings in a foreign policy that is ever more based upon expediency and reaction, rather than on principle and positive goals. They see those shortcomings in the failure of our country to keep pace with the needs of our educational system, knowing the danger that such neglect entails for our entire future. They see those shortcomings in an economy that is now in the throes of a costly recession.

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Yes, the American people hardly need us to remind them about mistakes of the past or the present. Rather, they are looking and searching for leadership for the future.

That is our challenge in the Minnesota DFL, and in the Democratic Party nationally.

If we are to be true to ourselves and the political party in which we believe, we must dedicate our lives, our energies, to winning for our country the all-out struggle which we face for the survival of freedom.

Vital to that struggle is immediately rebuilding our own economy to full productive capacity.

We can not let this recession undermine and weaken our position of world leadership, as it is already threatening to do. We cannot let it weaken our capacity to maintain a program of strength.

Actually, we need to do more than just stop this recession. We need to plan for economic growth, development, and expansion -- because we have an expanding population, and we have great world-wide commitments of long duration.

We need to design a program for America that will do the job that needs to be done -- and we must have the will, and the majority, to carry it out.

We have made an impressive start in Minnesota. We have shown what a dedicated political party can achieve -- for our state and our country,

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not just for ourselves.

We must preserve the gains we have made at every level, and march on together to greater victories this fall.

We can expect an all-out effort by the Republican machine to stem our tide of progress. We must not let it succeed.

Instead, we must mobilize our own energies and efforts, and work harmoniously together for another sweeping DFL victory. We must re-elect our able Governor Orville Freeman, and his fine cabinet of Constitutional officers. We must re-elect our great liberal representatives in Congress. We must re-elect all of our liberal legislators. We must move ahead, by gaining new seats in the legislature, as well as new seats in the Congress. This is our year of opportunity.

That task falls heaviest upon the shoulders of the men and women who have so loyally volunteered their time and energies to serve as local, county, district, and state officers of our party. We salute them, and extend them our hearty thanks for magnificent service.

Our party is still young and vigorous, with the hand of friendship extended to new workers in our ranks. Yet we cannot, and must not, forget the dedicated service of those who have blazed the trail and pioneered the way for the strength we can mobilize today.

As a spirited party of the people, we welcome open discussion and free expression of differing opinions. We believe in the Democratic processes.

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But, let's keep our eyes on our real goals, and stand firmly united against powerful reactionary forces of the Republican Party.

We CAN and WILL WIN this year, but it will take all of us to do it, working together. I know all of you can be counted on to help.

Good luck and thanks for your loyal support and friendship.

May 14, 1958



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