

FROM:  
HUMPHREY FOR PRESIDENT COMMITTEE  
Suite 740, Roosevelt Hotel  
Washington 9, D.C  
ADams 2-3411

FOR RELEASE: 2 P.M., Monday, January 25

REMARKS PREPARED FOR DELIVERY BY SENATOR HUBERT H. HUMPHREY  
BEFORE THE WEST VIRGINIA STATE LEGISLATURE

Charleston, West Virginia, January 25, 1960

"The fact that the West Virginia Legislature is grappling with questions of supplying food for the hungry and other welfare measures points up the bitter fact that the prosperity we hear so much about is certainly not a general prosperity.

"There are too many distressed areas in this country -- too many pockets of depression and despair -- for any American to feel complacent about our national strength.

"We have a huge unfinished job in the United States. That is the job of providing economic security for all our people.

"I want to talk to you about one aspect of this general problem -- the job of eliminating once and for all the disgraceful amount of actual poverty and economic stagnation that still exists in this richest land in the world.

"Poverty is always a tragedy, any time and any place. But poverty in a lang that is enjoying a national product close to 500 billion dollars is more than a tragedy -- it is a national scandal.

"According to official government figures, there were in 1957 no less than 11,000,000 families -- families, mind you, with total family incomes of less than \$3000 a year -- less than \$58 a week. Six million of these families had incomes actually less than \$2000 a year -- less than \$39 a week. In addition, there were about 5 million persons living along whose incomes were under \$1500 a year -- under \$29 a week.

"These are the almost fifty million poor people living in America in the middle of the twentieth century.

"The test of our progress is not whether we provide more for those who have enough; the test of our progress is whether we provide enough for those who have too little. The existence of 50 million poor people in our midst is sad evidence that we have so much more to do.

"There is no single, simple solution to the problem of poverty. Just as there is no single, simple cause of poverty. It must be attacked on every front.

"What are some of these fronts?

"One vital front concerns the aged. Their problems constitute one of the most crucial battlegrounds. For too many years now we have been authorizing one study after another, holding one conference after another, making one speech after another, about the problems of the aged. The time has come to act.

"In addition to many other things, Congress must pass a measure which will provide hospitalization and nursing home care and other services for our elderly people as a matter of earned benefits under our social security law. We must forge ahead on medical research. The Dread disease of cancer must be conquered.

more...

"What about the wage earner? After all most of the low income families are headed by wage-earners. It is clear that the greatest hope for eliminating poverty is regular employment at decent wages for America's wage-earners.

"That means a number of things.

". It means making it easier -- not harder -- for unions to organize the unorganized and bring them the economic benefits of collective bargaining.

". It means raising the federal minimum wage at once to at least \$1.25 -- and, even more importantly -- extending the coverage of the Fair Labor Standards Act to millions not now covered.

". It means at long last doing something about the one million migrant farm workers, who, on the average, work less than 150 days a year -- and these at miserable wages and under disgraceful conditions of housing, transportation and child labor.

". It means restoring the economic health of dozens of chronically depressed areas. I am sure you share the bitter regret that the President vetoed the distressed areas bill, as well as another bill that has so much meaning for your state -- the Coal Research Bill.

"This area redevelopment or distressed areas legislation would provide two badly-needed programs -- one to retrain unemployed workers to take new kinds of jobs in industry, and the other to encourage new industry to establish itself in the distressed areas through long-term, low-interest government financing.

"There is even more that the Federal and State Governments can do together. Let me outline some of the other basic features of a program to provide for area redevelopment.

"I propose that government undertake broad programs for the restoration of basic health to the distressed areas, such as:

1. The concentration of authorized public works programs designed to lay the base for greatly expanded future productivity of the areas -- to provide more efficient transportation facilities, more and cheaper power sources, better school buildings and laboratories, and greatly expanded timber management practices, in appropriate areas.

Such public works projects would also act as immediate stimulants in the area by providing additional jobs for workers and markets for businessmen in the area.

2. Intensified government-financed research into the ways of making greater use of the raw materials and natural resources of the distressed areas, and 'to find additional outlets for existing industry and new outlets for the latent wealth of the area.'

3. The immediate consideration by the Federal Government of an export subsidy on coal where foreign competition and cut-rate prices injure American producers and shippers.

4. A determined effort to find greater uses for our vast coal resources in our foreign aid program, particularly to the underdeveloped countries that are beginning their industrialized programs.

". Ending economic distress and expanding our economy also means bringing our unemployment insurance system up to date, so that wage earners do not become paupers when deprived of work through no fault of their own. More than one of every three unemployed in 1958 received no unemployment insurance, and millions exhausted the inadequate benefits to which they were entitled.

". Ending economic distress means eliminating discrimination in employment which all too often keeps Negroes and other minority groups from obtaining jobs which their talent and training entitles them to.

". It means improving the skills and education of workers unable to meet the needs of a rapidly changing technology.

"All of these things, and more, must be done to give Americans a better chance to lead dignified lives of gainful employment.

"I have spoken many times -- and will again -- on the plight of the American farm family. I wish today merely to place this issue in the context of the basic theme of this address. Certainly, the curse of poverty can never be eliminated from America unless we do justice to the family farmers of our nation who have given us the tremendous abundance of food and fiber.

Through my Family Farm Program Development Act, I have proposed legislation which will provide a measure of security for our farm families and will at the same time better utilize our food and fiber products as a powerful force for peace and world economic development.

"Our primary goal must be decent wages or other private income for every American family or individual. But there will always be some families without breadwinners. And there will always be individuals unable to provide for themselves.

"It was Isaiah who called upon us 'to do well; relieve the oppressed; judge the fatherless; plead for the widow.'

"It saddens me to find America failing to do all it should, all it could.

"Last year over five million Americans received some quantities of surplus food from our bulging warehouses. But under this Administration, the law has been administered so that only those commodities in super-abundant supply have been made available for these direct distributions of food for the needy.

"Cornmeal, dried skim milk and flour are all wonderful commodities -- but should an American child be expected to live on these alone?

"As Chairman of an Agriculture subcommittee, I held hearings last year on measures which would have made grants to localities for distribution of these foods and many others to families and communities in need.

"It distressed me -- as it should all America -- that the White House opposed these improvements. Why? Because it was claimed that it would unbalance the budget. But is the budget purely a matter of dollars? Is there no room on the balance scale for human needs or feelings?

"Despite Administration opposition, we did get through the Congress a modest food stamp program. But already Mr. Benson has announced that he does not intend to put that program into effect.

"In addition to alleviating those suffering from poverty today, we must seek to eliminate those factors that tend to perpetuate economic distress.

"We must provide adequate education for every child. This means new classrooms, more and better trained and paid teachers, scholarships and improved curriculum.

"We must have a housing program big enough for a growing America -- housing for all -- slum clearance -- clean and modern neighborhoods.

"We must bring the blessings of medical progress to all our people -- more and better hospitals-- and adequate supply of doctors, nurses and technicians.

"I have merely touched on some of the obligations of our society in this basic area in the midst of our so-called prosperous society.

"We must not be fooled by slogans. We must face up to the facts of life as we find them, and then organize ourselves and all our resources for the job I have outlined today.

"For I ask you: How can we bring peace to the world, how can we maintain our moral and spiritual leadership in the world, if we fail to demonstrate a capacity for taking care of our own people -- their needs, their hopes, their very lives?

Gov. Freemar

Sen. May Lead = Martin  
000329  
- Tom Myles

READING COPY FOR SENATOR HUMPHREY

000329

REMARKS BEFORE THE WEST VIRGINIA LEGISLATURE - JANUARY 25, 1960

Sen. Boyd  
Dunn  
Randle

Speaker  
① Harry Bailey

Presid Senate  
~~Smith~~ Bear  
Ralph

Cong  
John  
Black

Ken  
Hecker

Clay  
Bailey

Mrs  
Key

Arch  
Moore

The fact that the West Virginia legislature is grappling with  
questions of supplying food for the hungry and other welfare measures  
points up the bitter fact that the prosperity we hear so much about is  
certainly not a general prosperity. *lopsided!*

There are too many distressed areas in this country -- too many  
pockets of depression and despair-- for any American to feel  
complacent about our national strength *and well being.*

We have a huge unfinished job in the United States. That is  
the job of providing economic security for all our people.  
*opportunity and*

I want to talk to you about one aspect of this general problem--  
the job of eliminating once and for all the disgraceful amount of  
actual poverty and economic stagnation that still exists in this  
richest land of the world.

000330

Poverty is always a tragedy, any time and any place. But  
✓ poverty in a land that is enjoying a national product close to  
500 billion dollars is more than a tragedy. It is a national scandal.

According to official government figures, there were in 1957  
no less than 11,000,000 families -- families, mind you -- with total  
family incomes of less than \$3000 a year -- less than \$58 a week.  
Six million of these families had incomes actually less than \$2000  
a year -- less than \$39 a week. In addition, there were about  
5 million persons living alone whose incomes were under \$1500 a year --  
under \$29 a week.

These are the almost fifty million poor people living in <sup>Rich</sup> America  
in the middle of the twentieth century.

The test of our progress <sup>and morality</sup> is not whether we provide more for  
those who have enough; the test of our progress is whether we provide  
enough for those who have too little. ~~The existence of 50 million~~  
~~poor people in our midst is sad evidence that we have so much more to do.~~

There is no single, simple solution to the problem of poverty -- just as there is no single, simple cause of poverty. It must be attacked on every front.

What are some of these fronts?

One vital front concerns the aged. ~~Their problems constitute~~

~~one of the most crucial battlegrounds.~~ For too many years now we

*having studies, hold conferences and*  
~~have been authorizing one study after another, holding one conference~~

*making speeches*  
~~after another, making one speech after another,~~ about the problems

of the aged. The time has come to act.

In addition to many other things, Congress must pass a measure which will provide hospitalization and nursing home care and other services for our elderly people as matter of earned benefits under our social security law. We must forge ahead on medical research. The dread disease of cancer must be conquered.

What about the wage earner? After all, most of the low-income families are headed by wage-earners. It is clear that the greatest hope for eliminating poverty is regular employment <sup>full employment</sup> at decent wages for America's wage-earners.

That means a number of things.

-- It means making it easier -- not harder -- for unions to organize the unorganized and bring them the economic benefits of collective bargaining.

-- It means raising the federal minimum wage at once to at least \$1.25 -- and, even more importantly -- extending the coverage of the Fair Labor Standards Act to millions not now covered.

-- It means at long last doing something about the one million migrant farm workers who, on the average, work less than 150 days a year -- and these at miserable wages and under disgraceful conditions of housing, transportation and child labor.

000333

It means restoring the economic health of dozens of chronically depressed areas. I am sure you share the bitter regret that the President vetoed the distressed areas bill, as well as another bill that has so much meaning for your state -- the Coal Research Bill.

This area redevelopment or distressed areas legislation would provide two badly-needed programs -- one to retrain unemployed workers to take new kinds of jobs in new industry, and the other to encourage new industry to establish itself in the distressed areas through long-term, low-interest government financing.

*Domestic  
economic  
Aid =  
Not Just  
foreign  
Aid.*

There is even more that the Federal and State governments can do together. Let me outline some of the other basic features of a program to provide for area redevelopment.

I propose that government undertake broad programs for the restoration of basic health to the distressed areas, such as:

000334

1. The concentration of authorized public works programs designed to lay the base for greatly expanded future productivity of the areas -- to provide more efficient transportation facilities, more and cheaper power sources, better school buildings and laboratories, and greatly expanded <sup>land, water, timber conservation</sup> ~~timber management~~ practices, in appropriate areas.

Such public work projects would also act as immediate stimulants ~~in the area~~ by providing additional jobs for workers and markets for businessmen of the area.

2. Intensified government-<sup>and private</sup> ~~financed~~ research into the ways of making greater use of the raw materials and natural resources of the distressed areas, and to find additional outlets for existing industry and new outlets for the latent wealth of the area.

3. The immediate consideration by the Federal Government of an export subsidy on coal where foreign competition and cut-rate prices injure American producers and shippers. including more ...

000335

~~A~~ A determined effort to find greater uses for our vast coal resources in our foreign aid program, particularly to the underdeveloped countries that are beginning their industrialized programs.

yes, --Ending economic distress and expanding our economy also means bringing our unemployment insurance system up to date so that wage earners do not become paupers when deprived of work through no fault of their own. More than one of every three unemployed in 1958 received no unemployment insurance, and millions exhausted the inadequate benefits to which they were entitled.

(we saw this in the iron mines Area of Minn)

more ...

✓ --Ending economic distress means eliminating discrimination in employment which all too often keeps Negroes and other minority groups from obtaining jobs which their talent and training entitle them to.

✓ -- It means improving the skills and education of workers unable to meet the needs of a rapidly changing technology.

All of these things, and more, must be done to give Americans a better chance to lead dignified lives of gainful employment.

more ...

I have spoken many times -- and will again -- on the plight of the American farm family. I wish today merely to place this issue in the context of the basic theme of this address. Certainly, the curse of poverty can never be eliminated from America unless we do justice to the family farmers of our nation who have given us this tremendous abundance of food and fiber.

Through my Family Farm Program Development Act, I have proposed legislation which will provide a measure of security for our farm families and will at the same time better utilize our food and fiber products as a powerful force for peace and world economic development.

Our primary goal must be decent wages or other private income ~~for every American~~ for every American family or individual. But there will always be some families without breadwinners -- and there will always be individuals unable to provide for themselves.

000338

It was Isaiah who called upon us "to do well; relieve the oppressed; judge the fatherless; plead for the widow."

It saddens me to find America failing to do all it should -- all it could.

Last year, over five million Americans received some quantities of surplus food from our bulging warehouses. ~~But under this~~

~~Administration,~~ <sup>But</sup> the law has been administered so that only those commodities in super-abundant supply ~~have been~~ <sup>were</sup> made available for ~~these direct distributions of food~~ to the needy.

Cornmeal, dried skim milk and flour are all wonderful commodities -- but should <sup>any</sup> American child be expected to live on these alone?

As Chairman of an Agriculture subcommittee, I held hearings last year on measures which would have made grants to localities for distribution of these foods and many others to families and communities in need.

(Sen Jennings Randolph + Bob Byrd.)

more ...

It distressed me -- as it should all America -- that the White House opposed these improvements. Why? Because it was claimed that it would unbalance the budget. But is the budget purely a matter of dollars? Is there no room on the balance scale for human needs or feelings? *Moral Budget*

Despite Administration opposition, we did get through the Congress a modest food stamp program. But already <sup>*Set Aque*</sup> ~~Mr. Benson~~ has announced that he does not intend to put that program into effect.

In addition to alleviating those suffering from poverty today, we must seek to eliminate those factors that tend to perpetuate economic distress. *Forgo ahead - unafraid - answer the Communist needs.*

We must provide adequate education for every child. This means new classrooms, more and better trained and paid teachers, scholarships and improved curriculum. *(Brain Power)*

h We must have a housing program big enough for a growing America --  
housing for all -- slum clearance -- clean and modern neighborhoods.

h We must bring the blessings of medical progress to all our people --  
more and better hospitals -- an adequate supply of doctors, nurses  
and technicians.

h I have merely touched on some of the obligations of our society  
in this basic area of eliminating poverty in the midst of our so-called  
prosperous society, and creating social justice for all.

h We must not be fooled by slogans. We must face up to the facts  
of life as we find them, and then organize ourselves and all our  
resources for the job I have outlined today.

For I ask you: How can we bring peace to the world, how can we  
maintain our moral and spiritual leadership in the world, if we fail  
to demonstrate a capacity for taking care of our own people -- their  
needs, their hopes, their very lives.



# 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](http://www.mnhs.org)