

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

FOR RELEASE:

Thursday PMS, March 17, 1960

WASHINGTON, March 17 -- Pointing out that the labor movement's accomplishments benefit many more than its just own membership, Senator Hubert H. Humphrey (D.-Minn.) told 3,000 delegates to the annual National Legislative Conference of the AFL-CIO Building and Construction Trades Department today:

"Labor works for a better America."

Labor-relations legislation is but a small part of organized labor's legislative program, said the contender for the Democratic Presidential nomination.

Other goals it seeks "in the public interest" he listed as \$1.25 minimum wage, improvements in unemployment insurance, health benefits for retired persons, slum clearance and housing, public works, conservation, help for the family farm, a healthy climate for small business, and human rights. He sees "eye to eye" with Labor on each.

He spoke at the 6th annual conference of the group held at the Sheraton-Park Hotel.

Declaring that the Republican Administration is "dedicated to the worship of a new kind of golden calf -- the fiscal budget," Senator Humphrey said:

"I say that we have to balance the social and moral budget - by a truly massive program of construction, public and private, to meet the needs of the great America of today and the greater America of tomorrow."

Sen. Humphrey complimented the Department's efforts to eliminate discrimination, and said, "Labor's dedication to human rights - on the job and in the community - has been demonstrated over and over again."

(Text of remarks is attached.)

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Remarks By
Senator Hubert Humphrey
National Legislative Conference
Building & Construction Trades Dept., AFL-CIO
Sheraton-Park Hotel, Washington, D. C.
March 17, 1960

It is good to be here and to meet so many of my friends in the labor movement. It is inspiring to see 3000 delegates of the Building Trades Unions gathered here. You know what you want, and you've come to Washington to tell us.

As you know, some people call Hubert Humphrey a "labor" Senator. I like to think of myself as a Senator who respects labor and who listens to what labor has to say.

I happen to think that, out of your rich practical experience, you have much of value to contribute to us in our deliberations here in Washington.

And, as I listen to you and read the programs adopted - democratically adopted, too! - by the great labor bodies, I find much reassurance.

I find that, on just about every important public issue, the labor movement is on the same side of the fence as this Senator.

We seem to agree - and I like it that way.

Out of 214 votes tabulated by the AFL-CIO, I agreed with you 213 times.

That's 99.5% - purer than Ivory Soap, and that's no payola!

There's no mystery why you and Hubert Humphrey see eye to eye. Yours is a genuine public interest program.

It flows from your realization, your profound understanding, that labor's welfare depends upon the general welfare. As AFL-CIO Secretary Bill Schnitzler said recently:

"We believe that what is good for America is good for American labor. In one area after another, it is clear that our own members will improve their lot in life only as all the people in the community improve theirs...The welfare, happiness, and security of our people requires sound legislation."

The labor movement of America is virtually a people's lobby. Each of you this week, as you went about buttonholing your Senators and your Congressmen, was serving the public interest. This is good citizenship, good Americanism, and I salute you for it.

Now, I didn't make this discovery about labor in an election year. I didn't wait for 1960.

As long ago as last June, I got sick and tired of listening to speeches - in and out of the Senate - and reading articles that told us everything that was wrong with the labor movement.

Even the President and his Cabinet got into the act. They were working every angle to get anti-union legislation enacted. The country's press and the airwaves overflowed with anti-labor poison. I thought someone ought to stand up and balance the record.

So I arose on the Senate floor and told my colleagues - and the country - what was right with labor.

As you all know, I said a mouthful - and a heart full.

To me, the labor movement means making "democracy" and "citizenship" and the "right to petition" more than fine phrases you read in a civics textbook.

The labor movement made these a reality for millions of men and women.

I can give personal testimony - and you can call on me any time as a witness - about what labor seeks from the Congress of the United States.

Your lobbyists aren't coy or tongue-tied or mealy-mouthed about expressing labor's goals. They lay it right on the line.

Of course, they seek legislation that will permit them to organize and to function with a minimum of government interference. But labor relations legislation is only a small part - although an important one of their program.

Labor asks that the Federal minimum wage be increased to \$1.25 and its coverage greatly expanded - and so do I.

It's the Administration that seems to think \$50 a week is too much for millions of workers - even now, in the 1960's, in what some people call our "affluent society."

Union members have their wage standards protected by contracts, negotiated through collective bargaining. Very few union members need a Federal Minimum Wage. But they have the generosity and the vision to speak and work for the unorganized - those who cannot speak and work for themselves.

If that's narrow self-interest, I'd better get myself a new dictionary!

Labor asks for improvements in unemployment insurance - and so do I. Here again, it is the Administration that gives you the stone face and the stone-deaf ear.

Union members would benefit from this - but there are a greater number of non-union workers who need it. Many union members, in fact, look to union-negotiated supplementary employment benefits for their own protection.

Labor asks for health benefits for retired people. It asks for higher appropriations for education and hospitals and medical research and child welfare. And so have I.

These are practicable, desirable social goals - and long, long overdue.

Labor lobbies for slum clearance and urban redevelopment and a housing program for America's growing families. This surely is in the public interest.

Labor seeks depressed areas legislation, help for community facilities, bigger public roads programs and vitally needed public works. And so do I, for these are sorely needed by everybody, not just by labor.

Labor favors conservation of natural resources, and so do I - for this is a duty all of us owe to our children and grandchildren.

Labor supports legislation to help the family farmer - as I have long been doing in the Senate.

Labor wants a healthy legislative climate for small business. Is not such promotion of our free enterprise system in the public interest?

My friends, I could go on and on, listing all the good causes in which labor and liberals have fought shoulder to shoulder. But I can sum it up in six words:

Labor works for a better America.

My friends, you are - by virtue of your trades and skills - essential to the building of this better America: to the homes and hospitals, the highways and harbors, the factories and the power stations.

This Senator is sick and tired of hearing talk of the housing problem, the school problem, the highway problem. These are not problems, they are opportunities.

We'd be pretty poor parents if we kept complaining that our children caused us a problem by outgrowing their clothes - instead of rejoicing in their growth and their development.

And, no parents - even the worst ones - try to stop their children from growing.

But this Administration is so bothered by the growth of our economy that it is constantly cramping and curtailing it with "tight money" policies.

You all know what industry that is hit first and hardest - the construction industry.

Yet the tragic thing is that we have the manpower, the skills, the materials, the capital to build that better America.

All that we need is the intelligence and the will to use them.

We are building homes for our people at only 2/3 the rate that is needed. The decaying central sections of our cities need rebuilding and, if you please, face-lifting. We need more adequate highways, airports, hospitals, and all that is required to accommodate a growing population and its increasing needs and expectations.

This Administration is dedicated to the worship of a new kind of golden calf - the fiscal budget.

I say that we have to balance the social and moral budget - by a truly massive program of construction, public and private, to meet the needs of the great America of today and the greater America of tomorrow.

I know and sympathize with some of your particular objectives. That's why this Senator is proud to be the author of S. 1119, the bill to modernize and broaden the scope of the Davis-Bacon Prevailing Wage Act. That's why this Senator will work for the adoption of S. 2643, the bill to reverse the Denver rule and permit situs picketing.

Both the bills are just. Both are needed. I join with you in urging their speedy enactment.

Much of what the unions of America have done for their members and for others can be measured in statistics: Wages increased...hours reduced...pensions gained...contributions to charity...CARE packages to refugees abroad.

But the biggest contribution of all cannot be measured in dollars or in hours.

Almost two thousand years ago the Apostle Paul said: "Be ye members one of another."

That is what the labor movement has meant for millions of working men and women. It has brought them together, made them members one of another, given them common tools for common goals.

And, as they won strength through unity, each of them gained the strength to speak up for himself, to talk back when necessary, to push back when the bosses tried to push him around.

Unions have put flesh on the bare bones of the democratic process by giving this voice to millions of individuals. Every day, literally thousands of men and women are speaking out for their fellow-workers - the shop stewards, the grievance committees, the contract negotiators, the local executive boards.

This is American democracy at work. This is one of the things I find so right about the labor movement.

You have met and mastered the challenge of Communist infiltration. You have met and are mastering the problem of corruption. And you are in process of solving a problem you have inherited from the society in which we live.

I refer, of course, to discrimination.

I cannot tell you how proud I was of the labor movement when I read two weeks ago of the action taken by your retiring President, my good friend Dick Gray.

When the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People submitted a report to the Vice President indicating that there was much discrimination in the apprenticeship program, Dick Gray didn't run away from the problem - or make excuses. He promptly wired the Vice President. Reminding him that the Building Trades Department fully supported the AFL-CIO Constitution on discrimination, Dick Gray requested that the government committee involved notify the Department of all complaints it may receive on discrimination in either apprenticeship or employment.

"I can assure you," Dick Gray added, "that this office will investigate each and every such complaint and will do everything within our power to immediately correct any incidents of discrimination I am sure that I speak with the support of the overwhelming number of building trades leaders throughout the country in telling you that discrimination because of race, color, or creed must be wiped out whether it be in the arena of casting a vote for public office or employment."

I know that Dick Gray's commitment will be honored by his successor, Neil Haggerty, whose record in California is magnificent, and by his associates.

Labor's dedication to human rights - on the job and in the community - has been demonstrated over and over again. Only last week, George Meany wired me and urged that the Senate end the filibuster and proceed to the adoption of an effective civil rights bill. I didn't need the wire, I can assure you - but I was glad to know that labor was, once again, on the job and working for the common good.

My friends, one of the things I like most about you is that you aren't content to rest on past achievements - you are always pressing forward to new and higher goals.

I know you, and I know you will never be content to have America second-best in any field.

Like me, you want America to roll up its sleeves, go to work and prove to Mr. Khrushchev that the time will never come when we will lie down and let him "bury" us.

You want an educational program second to none, capable of developing our full brain power.

You want an economy second to none - and going ahead at the giant strides of which America is capable.

You want a defense program second to none.

And, after almost eight years of drift at home and the decay of our position in the world, you want - we all want, - the very best and not the second best in national leadership.

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① St. Patrick's Day -

REMARKS OF SENATOR HUBERT HUMPHREY

National Legislative Conference
Building & Constructing Trades
Department, AFL-CIO

Sheraton Park Hotel, Washington, D.C.
March 17, 1960

① Republicans
Main
Notre Dame
Weather

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!!
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What Labor seeks from Congress

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Yacht-Row Boat

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*unemp
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Growth

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Situs Picketing

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has*

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