

Radio Tape for Cliff Bour~~ne~~hette

For Taping May 13, 1964

Ladies and gentlemen . . . this is Senator Hubert Humphrey speaking to you from my office on Capitol Hill in Washington. . .

I would like to make a brief report on the War on Poverty that President Johnson has asked us to undertake. It is a struggle in which all America must enlist . . . a struggle against a condition that we have been inclined to ignore. I don't believe we were completely unaware of the existence of poverty in our midst. But I think it has been easy to ignore because it is not concentrated in any one spot.

There is nothing new about the evils of poverty. Its destructive toll on the human spirit--even more than its social cost in welfare and disease--has torn at our sense of justice. What is new about poverty is that it is not necessary.

We are able to do more about poverty than we ever could before. America's resources are so developed that we have the means and the knowledge to bring people into an adequate sharing of our total economic life. Americans no longer have to live in poverty and it is wonderful that this is so. It will be nothing less than criminal negligence if our knowledge, and our resources, are not used to help people help themselves.

Poverty is distributed among different groups and exists in separate pockets. It affects the lives of more than 40 million of our fellow Americans who must live at or below the level of subsistence.

These people are not shiftless, lazy or without ambition. They have just been forgotten after slipping through the cracks of a rapidly changing society that is revolutionizing our economic life.

Five basic programs are included in the plan President Johnson has proposed as a beginning in our war to eliminate poverty. It was sent to the Congress in a bill called "The Economic Opportunity Act of 1964." This legislation is where we must begin.

It will give underprivileged Americans an opportunity to continue their education and to develop skills in work-study and work-training programs. It will provide funds to help local communities develop plans to fight poverty on their own. It will provide small business loans to boost investment and create more jobs. And it will give Americans of all ages an opportunity to enlist as volunteers in the war on poverty.

In the area of employment, we must provide jobs and trained people to hold them. This will enable those in need to do what they really want to do--stand on their own feet. Jobs are needed more than welfare . . . welfare alone only mows the tops of the dandelion and does not get rid of the weed.

In the area of education, we must place more emphasis on schooling for the children of the underprivileged. The cycle of poverty must be broken if the misfortunes of the fathers are not to be visited upon the sons. We must help these children escape under-education, unemployment, low income, dependency, weakened family authority, and personal inadequacy.

In the area of local initiative, we must provide help to local communities that want to take the initiative in eradicating poverty. This fight is a national responsibility but its successful completion depends on the help and initiative of every citizen.

All of us have been called on to enlist in the struggle to help our fellow Americans forced to live in poverty . . . to support the leadership of President Johnson in this undertaking . . . and to fulfill our responsibilities of world leadership. I am convinced we have the wisdom and the human concern to do the job. Thank you.

[May 13, 1964]

Bouvette

A RADIO TAPE FOR CLIFF BOURCHETTE

Ladies and Gentlemen

This is Senator Humphrey speaking to you from my office on Capitol Hill in Washington. . .

I should like to make a brief report on the War on Poverty to which President Johnson has called us. I do not believe we were completely ignorant about the existence of poverty in our midst. We were however inclined to ignore it. We could do that because poverty is not concentrated in any one spot. It exists in pockets of the elderly tucked away here, in a central city slum there, in a marginal rural area somewhere else, and is scattered through other regions like Appalachia where it can easily be overlooked even though it depresses a region. It is natural for all of us to look at the bright and pass by the ugly.

But there is no excuse for us to "pass by on the other side" like the Priest and the Levite in the story of the Good Samaritan, when more than 40 million of our fellow Americans must live at or below the level of subsistence. These people are not shiftless, lazy, or without ambition. They have just been

forgotten when they slipped through the cracks of a rapidly changing society that is revolutionizing our economic life.

If we ignore the poor further we will turn our backs on the basic values of our Judeo-Christian heritage. It will be a complete disgrace if the richest society on the face of the earth fails to lift its poor into a status of self-respect and independence above the poverty line. There is nothing new about the evils of poverty. Its deprivations and degradations have nagged a civilized conscience for centuries. What is new about it, is that it is no longer necessary.

Therefore we must eliminate it. President Johnson has called for a war upon it until it is eliminated. The proposals he has sent to the Congress in "The Economic Opportunity Act of 1964" are where we must begin. They are only a beginning, but they contain the principles and form of the attack we must sustain.

Five basic programs are proposed. Underprivileged Americans will be given opportunity to develop skills and continue education on a work-training, work-study program. American communities will be given opportunity to develop plans to fight ~~poverty~~ their own poverty with Federal assistance. Small business loans will give investment incentive to create more employment. Family unity

will be sustained by job support of those unable to care for their families.

Americans in all parts of the country and of all ages will be given the opportunity to enlist as volunteers in the war on poverty wherever it exists.

The principles guiding the attack on poverty are clear:

In area of employment

1. Jobs are needed more than welfare. To give welfare without jobs is to create dependency. Where human need is urgent, of course welfare relief should be given. But welfare alone only mows the tops of the dandelion and does not get rid of the weed. Jobs must be provided and people must be trained to hold them. Then they can do what they really want to do--stand on their own feet.

In area of education

2. The war on poverty puts a major emphasis upon the education of the children of the underprivileged. If the misfortunes of the fathers are not to be visited upon the sons, the self-perpetuating cycle of poverty must be broken. Under-education, unemployment, low income, dependency, weakened family authority, and personal inadequacy breed themselves. Therefore we must assault the tasks of education of the young to help them break out of the cycle.

In area of local initiative

3. All America must become aware, take initiative, volunteer. This means individuals, local communities, states, regions. Poverty is not a problem only of the poor. It is a national problem and responsibility. I know we have the resources with which to eliminate poverty. I believe we have the wit, wisdom

and the human concern.

The leadership of President Johnson must be supported. All America must enlist in the struggle for the duration. We owe this to our fellow Americans. We owe this to our responsibilities for leadership in the world.

Thank you.



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