

[Feb. 28]

PLEASE CREDIT ANY EXCERPTS OR QUOTES FROM THIS ABC RADIO AND TELEVISION PROGRAM TO "ABC'S ISSUES AND ANSWERS."

I S S U E S A N D A N S W E R S

- - -

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 28, 1965

:HOLD FOR RELEASE :
:
:11:30 A.M., SUNDAY :

GUESTS: The Honorable Hubert H. Humphrey,
 Vice President of the United States
 and
 The Honorable Sargent Shriver,
 Director, Office of Economic Opportunity

INTERVIEWED BY: Howard K. Smith
 ABC Commentator

- - -

MR. SMITH: Mr. Vice President, when Hubert Hoover was President, he talked about the end of poverty.

 When Franklin D. Roosevelt was President, he talked about elevating the bottom one-third out of poverty.

 Now President Johnson has expressed the same aim. Why should we be confident it will be done now?

VICE PRESIDENT HUMPHREY: Well, I think the circumstances are somewhat different, Mr. Smith. First of all, this Administration has designed a program which is especially designed, or directed towards that one-fifth in our American Community that has less than its fair share of the fruits and benefits of modern society, that is people who are underprivileged, or less fortunate. In the time of Franklin Roosevelt, he had a major depression on his hands affecting the entire nation. Today most of the nation is quite prosperous. The conditions of affluence or prosperity are the general prevailing conditions.

I do believe with Mr. Hoover, who surely was well-motivated and one of our great citizens and great Presidents, that there was a lack of design of program. There may have been a good desire, but the lack of particulars to get at the problem.

MR. SMITH: Now in your book "War On Poverty," you paint a very eloquent, but a very terrible picture of poverty in America. Now some Republican Senators and Congressmen on the Joint Economic Committee have maintained that we overestimate poverty. They say they know that half those classed as living in poverty own automobiles, and in Holston County, Kentucky, 90 percent own washing machines. Is it possible we overestimate it?

VICE PRESIDENT HUMPHREY: Well, to own an automobile --

first of all, you ought to identify its vintage, or its year -- to own an automobile does not necessarily mean that you are a prosperous or high-income, or even middle-income person. Ownership of an automobile today is almost essential if a person is going to seek gainful employment, and frequently ownership does not mean that it is paid for, and all too often it may mean that other necessities of life have been denied.

I think it is fair to say that there are some people who are in what we might call the very low income group -- below \$3,000 a year -- that are able to get by. They may live in a community where the cost of living is not very high, but surely these are not people that are using the best of themselves -- let's put it that way -- or given the opportunities to make the most out of their lives.

The poverty that I see, Mr. Smith, isn't just the poverty of the purse, even though that is the immediate visible sign of poverty. It may be a poverty of the failure to fully develop one's capacities, and thereby to remain unskilled. a common laborer, poorly paid, when you could do better. It may be poverty of illiteracy. It may be the poverty that comes from lingering sickness, or illness. And then there is another kind of poverty which is one of hopelessness, of frustration, the poverty of the spirit, and I think this is the poverty that we are seeking to get at.

Actually, the poverty program of President Johnson is not one of just dishing out dollars, or trying to share the wealth. Those days and that kind of thinking are way out-moded. In fact, that sort of thinking never really was very realistic. What we are seeking to do is to give people an opportunity to have once again within themselves a sense of dignity. That is why the emphasis is upon education, upon training, upon group relationships, upon even psychiatric and medical care for people, so that this feeling of lonesomeness, of helplessness and hopelessness can be banished.

The emphasis in the anti-poverty war, the emphasis is upon opportunity, creating opportunity, helping people to help themselves. The emphasis is upon education, training, development of the human personality and the potential skills of the individual.

You see there is a difference of emphasis, now.

MR. SMITH: Now the War On Poverty will train people who are unemployed, for jobs. Yet the number of jobs is not increasing impressively, while the number of people hunting for jobs is increasing very much indeed. Don't you have not just to train people to take jobs, but create jobs for people to take?

VICE PRESIDENT HUMPHREY: Yes, I would say that the first emphasis in the War On Poverty must be to keep this

economy of ours growing and expanding. At the same time that we wage war on joblessness and poverty, we are also studying the impact of automation, and what happens when people are displaced in industry.

Therefore, as you know, the Administration is seeking through every possible incentive to expand our economy. Great efforts are made to promote better relationships between capital and labor, management and labor. Tax incentives are given to industry.

Recently the President announced a new depreciation schedule that provided very substantial benefits to American industry. Why? Because only through the investment of capital, only through the expansion of industry, do you really create jobs. We are not asking for people to share jobs, we are asking for the economy, we are trying, through cooperation between business and labor and government, we are seeking to find ways and means of having this economy grow, to expand so that there is room in the economy for more people for gainful employment.

I would say therefore, Number One emphasis is upon maintaining an attitude of government towards a private enterprise system of cooperation, of friendship, of helpfulness so that we do build the economy for job opportunities.

MR. SMITH: Can you estimate, at the present rate --

three-quarters of a billion dollars were appropriated last year for this year, now you are aiming at twice that -- at the present rate when will the time come when everybody has a job, when everybody is out of the poverty level in income, when poverty is really licked?

VICE PRESIDENT HUMPHREY: Well, now the Scriptures tell us -- I believe it is in the 12th Chapter of the Gospel according to Saint John, that "the poor always ye shall have with you."

That was once the feeling of mankind. I don't believe that that is necessarily now the truth. We do have the opportunity now to do something about the poor. There was a period of time when it was forgiveable, you might say, because there were poor people. The resources weren't here to do enough to banish poverty. But actually now we do have the means, technically, scientifically, financially, politically, socially, in terms of experience and intellect, we have the means to really banish, for example, hunger. There is no need of there being hunger on the face of the earth any longer. We can defeat famine. We have the means to provide shelter. We have the means to provide education. So that the basic tools that you need to destroy poverty as such are within the grasp of man today.

Whether man will use those tools well, whether we will apply ourselves with sufficient steadfastness and sufficient

energy and dedication --

MR. SMITH: And no nation has those tools and resources the way this nation has, so how long do you think it will take -- ten years, a generation, two generations, or what?

VICE PRESIDENT HUMPHREY: Well, it will take time. I think it is very hazardous to make a prediction, but the most important thing in our society today is the first step. It is the beginnings. And once you start this program, it has a way of growing like compound interest, and I have sensed already in the War On Poverty that we have made some real advances. I wouldn't want to overdramatize it, but young people that were unskilled, the school drop-outs that were unemployed and had been unemployed for one, two, three years, have been employed, after retraining, after they have been in the on-the-job training or in the neighborhood programs or in the manpower training programs. So we are making progress and I would say that each year we will chip away at this hard core of poverty.

Now some there will be with us who will just be what we call assistance cases, because they are either chronically ill, or mentally disturbed, or incapable of learning a trade, but that will be a small group.

The main thing I think here is a sense of hope. It is the politics of hope which means so much to America, this feeling that we can do it. And now we have the direction and we

8
have the incentive, we have the motivation and I think we have the tools to really win this struggle.

MR. SMITH: Well, I know it is very hard to estimate how long that will take, but perhaps you can tell me this: Now the Democrats are in their fifth year in office, and the unemployment rate is still I think the second highest in the Western world. When will we see an appreciable reduction in it, down towards two percent?

VICE PRESIDENT HUMPHREY: Well, it is coming down. In the meantime our population is growing so there is a larger number of people in the work force. I think you would be interested to note that actually the unemployment rate amongst adults is less than three percent. Now that is practically full employment.

Our real problem today is amongst about one million of the young people in the teen age group. That is amongst the school drop-outs.

Now that is the group that we are working on in this anti-poverty program. That is where we have our job corps, that is where we have our programs directed towards training these young people, not only in their hands and their minds, but in their motivation and in their adaptability for modern industry.

I think that it is fair to say that we will nip away each year at this youth unemployment, and this is the most dangerous

aspect of unemployment. Here are young people that are energetic, filled with the zest of life. Many times there are the victims of social conditions that are anything but hopeful, or helpful, and they are poorly trained, they are uneducated. So we are making a massive effort at education, Mr. Smith. We are making a massive effort of trying to give young people again the feeling that they are wanted and that there is a place for them. I think this is taking hold.

MR. SMITH: Let me ask you about something which is certainly closely related to this, but slightly different. Some thinkers say with automation and computerization going on, the time will come when the number of jobs doesn't just increase slightly every year, it actually turns down.

What will we do with these young people then when they come into the labor market and the number of jobs is decreasing?

VICE PRESIDENT HUMPHREY: We generally equate jobs with industrial jobs, manufacturing jobs, and it is entirely probable that automation will cut down the number of persons in manufacturing. In fact -- I believe I am correct in this, that we have no more people today in manufacturing than we had 20 years ago. Yet our population has increased by 40 million people or more. But we have so many more people

in the professions, so many more people in education and in the service jobs. So that while automation may provide the machines to build us an automobile or a washing machine or even a radio, you haven't the machine yet that can repair a TV, and you do not have the machine yet that can really take care of many of the service jobs and the service needs of the American people. And there is a larger number all the time going into what we call the social services, into programs of local and state government with community agencies.

I don't think that we need to worry too much about the fact that machines will displace man. I do think that man will have to learn how to use his time a little better. We may at some day in the distant future have a shorter work week. Then we have the problem of what do we do with the time that is on our hands. That is why we need to have greater development of our cultural activities.

This is why we need to place greater emphasis upon education so that we can better use this time that may be available to us. Now I look forward to the future with optimism. I think that every statistic that I read tells me that with determined effort and peace -- and I emphasize the latter, too -- and unless we get involved in a major international conflict, but with determined effort, with the knowledge that we have today of fiscal policy, monetary policy, with the know-how of American industry, it is fantastic, with the great

possibilities in the field of science, space technology and aeronautics, atomic energy, whole new areas opening up that I have been able to see a little more clearly now in my position as Vice President, as Chairman of the Space Council, just tremendous new opportunities for people, I think that we are just entering a new era.

As a matter of fact, it looks to me like we have been in the hallway and now we walk into the livingroom, and maybe a little later we will be able to walk out into the garden of the very wonderful and beautiful life. I think so. I think we need to have that objective.

MR. SMITH: Well, it strays a little from the subject, but you brought it up. Are we going to have the peace, do you think, that we need to do this?

VICE PRESIDENT HUMPHREY: Yes, I think so. I really do, because I truly believe that ever since that day at Alamogordo when the first nuclear device was exploded, that was has taken on a different face, and it is a very ugly face, and that the statesmen of the world wherever they may be, even in countries that today we look upon as enemies, or at least as not friendly, that they recognize that nuclear and thermo nuclear warfare is the end of the line. And I can't believe that man is that foolish, to destroy himself.

MR. SMITH: Let me ask you about one detail in the Job Corps program. I understand that applications are coming in,

but applications are not accepted from those with criminal records. Now it would seem to me those need help more than anybody else.

VICE PRESIDENT HUMPHREY: I think this is an area that we need to take a good look at, but I am a pragmatist. I have served in the Congress and I have had to face up to the facts of life. We did not want the Youth Camps, the Job Corps camps to become sort of, you might say, camps for delinquents and for those who had a bad record. These camps are made available today for young people that haven't had a break in life, so to speak, for people that need a little help before they get into serious trouble with the law. But I do feel that we need to take a good look now at this group in our society -- and it is a rather sizeable group -- that has been to court, that has had some -- committed some offense that has been held against them and written in the book, and we ought to try to rehabilitate, and I know of no better way to do it than to see that people have gainful work with education and the proper guidance and counseling that a young man or woman needs.

MR. SMITH: Well, thank you very much, Mr. Vice President.

Our next guest is the Honorable Sargent Shriver, Director of the Office of Economic Opportunity, and he is the man in charge of implementing the War On Poverty.

Mr. Shriver, the poverty program has really been in operation

just a short time -- I think four or five months.

Can you, however, give some signs of progress or achievement? How many people have been enrolled in the Job Corps? That is, how many people are on the way out of poverty now?

MR. SHRIVER: Well, in the Job Corps, since you asked about that first, we have had about 130,000 young men and women between 16 and 22 years of age apply for the Job Corps. We already have about 600 of them actually in Job Corps conservation centers, or Job Corps training centers. They will be going in -- every day the figure changes. It is growing by leaps and bounds.

In our Community Action programs for example we estimate there are as many as 100,000 Americans -- not just poor people but Americans of all economic strata, from business and labor and so on, already at work in their localities formulating plans and participating in plans to combat poverty.

We have had 9,000 Americans volunteer to join the Vista program which is the domestic counterpart of the Peace Corps abroad.

MR. SMITH: They will actually train these people, is that it?

MR. SHRIVER: That is correct, to work with them. We have Vista volunteers actually at work now. We have them in an institution for the mentally retarded, for example,

in Tennessee. We have them in New York, in California, working with migrant people, migrant labor people. These are people already at work in four and a half months.

MR. SMITH: Now you said you have 300 people in the Job Corps learning how to hold down jobs. How many do you think you will have by the end of 12 months?

MR. SHRIVER: Forty thousand.

MR. SMITH: Forty thousand in 12 months?

MR. SHRIVER: That is correct.

MR. SMITH: That is tremendous.

Well, tell me now -- this is rather more difficult -- give me an estimate of the time it will take to get everybody above the \$3,000 a year per family level out of poverty? How long will it take?

MR. SHRIVER: Well, that is almost an impossible question to answer. Sometimes -- I have said that is like saying to President Roosevelt on December 8, 1941, how long will the war last? World War II. I don't think anybody could make a good answer to that question you have just asked.

MR. SMITH: Do you think it will be closer to ten years, or 30 years?

MR. SHRIVER: I think it will be closer to ten, but it depends a great deal on the amount of money, for example, the Congress appropriates for this purpose, the amount of

support we are able to get nationwide. The effectiveness of the tools we are using. We are creating a whole new arsenal of weapons. It is just like launching a new war, and we have got new weapons. We are trying them, testing them. Some of them are going to prove to be very good and some not so good.

MR. SMITH: Are you satisfied with the results so far in four or five months?

MR. SHRIVER: In four or five months, I really am, yes. We have allocated already about \$275 million of the money appropriated to us by Congress, which was \$700 million. Many people, you know, in the early days said we never would get this war started at all, and the fact that we have literally hundreds of thousands of Americans involved in it, I think it is important.

We announced a program, for example, just last week called the Project Head Start. It is designed to help little children.

MR. SMITH: Little children -- before school age?

MR. SHRIVER: That is right. Now in one week we have had over a thousand communities in America send us a card, a card like this one I have brought with me. Here is one right here, from the superintendent of schools in Avoca, Iowa. Here is one from the superintendent of schools in Bee Branch, Arkansas, asking for our assistance to

start a pre-school program. We have got
thousands of these already.

15

MR. SMITH: Now I have looked at a map of your projects, and I see in the State of Georgia something like 14 dots for projects, and in the State of Mississippi, only 1. What is the reason for the discrepancy between the two.

MR. SHRIVER: The reason is that the State of Georgia organized local community action agencies very rapidly and they did this beginning almost a year ago. They were interested in it locally.

Mississippi wasn't interested in it locally, so nothing has happened. Our program depends on local action.

MR. SMITH: Now let me ask you a specific question about people who apply for the Job Corps, who want to learn trades. I notice that you won't accept people with criminal records. Now aren't they the people you need to take care of?

MR. SHRIVER: Well, what we say is we won't accept a person with an established pattern of criminality. For example, somebody who has been robbing banks all their life, or stealing cars all their life. But we have also said this, a single infraction will not bar a person from the Job Corps. For example, there are lots of Negro Americans who have participated in civil rights demonstrations. They may have been picked up for these, their thumbprints taken, their name

put on a police blotter. They are not barred from the Job Corps simply because they have been in one or two situations like that.

There are other boys who may have been part of a group who stole an automobile once. That would not bar them. So we are looking for people who are on the fringes, you might say, but we are not attempting to solve, let's say, the narcotics problem in America, or the problem of criminality. We are not set up for that. There are other agencies of the government which are working on those problems.

MR. SMITH: Now in four and a half months what do you find is the main limiting factor? What do you need most of that you haven't got yet?

MR. SHRIVER: The best possible management. People who are willing to drop their regular job and go to work in the War On Poverty, running some part of this program. For example, if we want to open up a hundred Job Corps conservation centers, we need teachers, we need conservation people, we need guidance counselors and we need them to be dedicated Americans who are able and willing to leave Washington or Chicago or San Francisco and go to Nevada and run a center like this.

MR. SMITH: And didn't you say you have had 10,000 applications from people to do that?

MR. SHRIVER: That is right. We have had 10,000

applications from counselors and others like

18

that but it still is true that to get the quality that you want it is necessary to have a lot of applications and some of these people don't want to leave where they are. They may like to be a counselor in an anti-poverty program where they live, but they may not want to go to some other place.

MR. SMITH: Now I have noticed in looking at your projects that some of them are administered by the Department of Health, Education and Welfare, some, Department of Agriculture, some, Department of Labor. How do you coordinate this and make sure it is effective?

MR. SHRIVER: That of course is one of the most difficult jobs, but we do have one man on my staff, a very high-ranking official in the staff, whose sole job is exactly that, the coordination of our efforts.

For example, one of the ways we do it is this: If a city, let's say Detroit or Pittsburgh, comes in with a community action program, that program comes to us. We then route that program around to these various departments and we get their criticisms and suggestions so that when we agree finally to go ahead with the city, it does have the coordinated approval of the federal government agencies involved.

MR. SMITH: Excuse me, Mr. Shriver. In just a moment

we will be back with more ISSUES AND ANSWERS.

(Announcement)

MR. SMITH: Mr. Shriver, people have said before -- in fact two Presidents have foreseen the end of poverty in America: President Hoover and President Franklin Roosevelt, and now President Johnson says it. What reason have we got to think it is going to happen now?

MR. SHRIVER: I think first of all that we have made progress since the days of Franklin Roosevelt.

We all remember that he said there is one third of the nation: ill-fed, ill-housed, and ill-clad. Well, today it is down to a fifth, so some progress has been made, but the significantly different thing now, I believe, is the fact that not only President Johnson but the United States Congress has made a national commitment to the elimination of poverty in this country. That is the essential new ingredient which was not present before. In the past sometimes they have talked about, let's say, better housing or better education, but now it is a permanent program, many people think, focused on the needs of poor people, and on their needs exclusively. That has never been done before.

MR. SMITH: So you think we know more about it and know more about what to do about it?

MR. SHRIVER: I don't think there is any question about

that.

20

MR. SMITH: Well, President Roosevelt said one-third were ill-housed and ill-fed, but that was one-third of 130 million people. Today it is one-fifth of 190 million, so it is really about the same number. The fall has been very slight, hasn't it?

MR. SHRIVER: Well, percentagewise -- oh, you mean in absolute numbers.

MR. SMITH: Yes.

MR. SHRIVER: Well, that is true, but let's say we had a billion people in the United States. If we still kept it down to the same percentages it would be good as a percentage of the problem.

MR. SMITH: Well, thank you very much indeed, Mr. Shriver, for coming here and appearing on ISSUES AND ANSWERS, and may your 300 people in the Job Corps, elevating themselves out of poverty, be multiplied to 300,000 very rapidly.

Our guests have been this week the Vice President of the United States, the Honorable Hubert H. Humphrey, making his first television appearance since his election as Vice President, and the Director of the Office for Economic Opportunity, the Honorable Sargent Shriver. This is Howard K. Smith in Washington.

- - - -



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