

REMARKS BY VICE-PRESIDENT HUMPHREY  
AT LUNCHEON IN HOME OFFICE  
MARCH 13, 1965

I have long looked forward to visiting the National headquarters of the Boy Scouts of America. I have been thinking about this, I think, ever since I was a Scout in Rev. Alfred Hart's troop way back in Doland, South Dakota. When we use to take those overnight trips and we would get away from the campfire and get into town and go to Thompson's butcher shop and get some hot dogs and come back later on in the night. I have been thinking about going to camporees and jamborees all of my life...I have been at some (most of them political).

We had quite a few Eagle Scouts. This little troop had its first meeting in a dust storm in the vestibule of The Methodist Church. They didn't even open the church doors.

This little Scout troop had its other meetings in the basement of Humphrey's Drug Store when we didn't have heat in the church. It also met in my living room. In the winter we would meet in the basement of the store. There really wasn't enough money in the church at that time to afford heat for the church basement. We didn't tell the Scouts and parents, but we got them all there.

I'm happy to report to you that the next meeting the church was heated. These were little experiences we had.

In those days people were pretty hard up. We had a rule that no one could have a new uniform, because we wanted boys not to feel inadequate nor in anyway inferior. So we passed around second-hand uniforms and tried to uniform each boy. We made our own equipment.

We had a lot of fun. Gee, we had fun. It was great. I was so proud of Troop 6. We used to have a little Scoutmaster's roundtable. Our little Scoutmaster's roundtable used to meet every week at noon, and we had great competition with the different churches that chartered the different troops. We had great fellowship amongst these Scoutmasters.

I took into my troop a number of boys that were in trouble. In fact I had two boys who got into trouble by pilfering the post office. I asked for the privilege of taking care of them. We gave them jobs in our store and put them on their honor. I'm happy to tell you that neither went bad. They were good boys.

So, Scouting is a joy, a challenge, and whenever I didn't have time for the Scouts, my wife Muriel would have time. The boys came out to the house when we didn't have much money, and they just ate us out of house and home. I remember they could eat hamburgers like mad.

I had sort of an understanding with some of my boys. I said we're not going to have any smoking. This was in those days when we took a firmer stand. I caught about six of the boys red handed, and I said, "You're through. Beat it."

They were the most unhappy boys in the world, and they used to come around every morning. Finally they came around and they apologized and we took them all back in the troop. We had a great time. I grew up with my boys. I did my Scouting right with them. I became a First Class Scout, and then a Star Scout. Then I became a Life Scout, but I never quite made it to Eagle Scout. If I'm not mistaken, I think we had six Eagle Scouts in our troop, which at that time was mighty good.

Any time I ever gave to Scouting as a Scout or Scoutmaster, I was richly rewarded by the joys of it, the fellowship of it, and the opportunity of it.

I know that this movement is making a great contribution to the life of this Nation, to the world. This is our youth movement. It really is part at least of the great American youth movement. It is voluntary. We wouldn't want it any other way.

We are indebted to men like Mr. Watson and Mr. Feist and other of these great men in business and finance. We are indebted to you professionals. We are all indebted to the Scoutmasters and their wives and to the troop committees for the services that are given. But, I don't think I'm exaggerating when I say we get more back from Scouting than we really give it. There is a great reward to those of us who participate.

When I look ahead and see the change that we have now, the change in our population, the hard core of our city; there is a change.

Life has changed greatly in the last quarter of a century. Family unity is tested more than ever. People move from one community to another. The roots are not as deep as they used to be.

In a very real sense the Scout movement has to perform part of the duties that a family use to perform. This is a very, very important responsibility.

What you are willing to do in areas of underprivileged people, these areas of broken homes, these areas where science and technology has left just whole groups of people behind. What you are able to do to reclaim those lives, to put some meaning into those lives. This is God's work. This is really what counts. This is really doing the job and as I have been listening here, I've been surprised.

I thought I knew a little bit about Scouting. I don't really know very much about it. When I hear what you are doing for the crippled and mentally retarded and for a Scout troop in a leper colony; and know that there are Scout troops overseas with our Armed Forces where the American families are to be found; and know you are contemplating programs in areas where we are now moving in on what the government calls the anti-poverty program; I think this is wonderful!

The fact that you are doing it because you want to do it, not because you have a contract, not because you are told to do it, not because you are paid to do it. This is what we like.

I know that I express the gratitude of the President, and even more important, the gratitude of the people of this country for this remarkable, wonderfully guided and inspired movement, the Boy Scouts of America.

I heard today that there is going to be a world jamboree of the Scouts in 1967, God willing, I hope to be there.

What a joy it will be to have boys from all over the world in our country. What a privilege it will be for them to see this land of ours, and how fortunate we will be to know the future leaders. They come here as youngsters, and just like that you hear that they are the head of a university or the leaders of a trade union or elected to a position in government. We need some long-range vision.

Mr. J. W. D. D. D.  
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April 23, 1965

MEMO for Ted Van Dyk  
FROM the Vice President

Here's a copy of my remarks -- ad-lib -- delivered  
at the Johnston Historical Museum, National Headquarters  
of the Boy Scouts along with a copy of my remarks at the  
luncheon.

I gather that you are keeping these.

REMARKS BY VICE-PRESIDENT HUMPHREY  
JOHNSTON HISTORICAL MUSEUM  
MARCH 13, 1965

Mr. Brunton, officers of the Boy Scouts of America at this great National headquarters, Scoutmasters, wives, families, and Scouters:

I simply can't tell you how much Mrs. Humphrey and I have enjoyed this rare opportunity of visiting this great national center of one of the truly magnificent movements and organizations in our great country.

I said a little earlier today, that during my life as a young man, and as a Scout, I'd always wanted to visit the National headquarters. I used to get BOYS' LIFE magazine, even before I was a Boy Scout (we didn't have Cub Scouts in those days). I had to wait until I was 53 years of age to come and see the National headquarters of the Scout movement. It seems like that's a long, long wait.

I first belonged to a Scout troop in a little town called Doland, South Dakota. A little later on I had the privilege of being a Scoutmaster. I was presented today with a reminder of those happy days when I was given my membership card. It says, "Hubert H. Humphrey is duly qualified and is registered with the Boy Scouts of America, Scoutmaster Troop 6, best troop in the whole state, (no that wasn't written there), Troop 6, Huron, South Dakota 1934 - 37."

Now I have a new card that says that I'm an Honorary Member of the National Council to the last day of May 1965. Well, let me just say that I'm grateful for both of these fine tokens of friendship and of membership.

I will always be grateful for the privilege of working in this movement. I shall look forward to working even more now. I've been inspired to do so. I want to thank my wife for being a sort of assistant Scoutmaster all the time.

Now we're looking ahead. I want to thank you on behalf of the government of the United States and on behalf of the President of the United States. I want to thank you not only for what you have done, but for what you are doing. I want to thank all the Boy Scouts from Tenderfoot through Eagle Scout for what you're doing, also the Explorers, and the Scoutmasters.

I want to say that it's what you're doing tomorrow that really interests me. The fact that you're going to expand this great movement, that you're going to take this message and this program of Scouting to those that need it--and need it desperately--to youngsters and young men of broken homes in areas where people have not had much opportunity.

You're going to take it in the spirit of good American citizenship, where what you're interested in is the boy--not his race, his color, his religion, but the boy--so that he can be taught good citizenship, respect for law and order, and where he can learn that initiative pays off--that he can be taught respect for the great institutions of our country--the family, home, church, government, and industry--and that hard work goes to make up America.

I want to thank you for your help with the Job Corps. I know that right here in this area you are going to work with those boys over at Camp Kilmer; they're going to need your help. I want to urge upon you that you take your program to more and more people. It's too good to keep to ourselves. Thank goodness it's expanding--but make it grow even faster. Will you?



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