

N O T E S

VICE PRESIDENT HUBERT HUMPHREY  
AFL-CIO OFFICEWORKERS CONVENTION  
SAN FRANCISCO

June 10, 1965

∟ My good friends, it is always a pleasure to meet with my friends of labor.

The world has changed a great deal in the past few years, and there are those who haven't kept up with change. But the labor movement in this country has not been backward. And it has not been timid. You have led the way toward progress.

Today American labor is particularly helping to meet here at home two of the challenges of our time:

① the war on poverty and the struggle to achieve *full freedom*  
democracy for all Americans.

But I don't have to be reminded that this  
is nothing new.

More than 150 years ago American labor was  
fighting for abolition of child labor . . . for free,  
compulsory education . . . for workmen's compensa-  
tion . . . for equitable tax laws . . . for the right  
of workers to bargain collectively.

And for many decades the labor movement has  
fought for civil rights and social justice.

All of us are in debt for what you have done,  
and what you continue to do.

Yes, American labor has kept up with change.  
Let's look back twenty and thirty years ago, and  
remember how things were in some unions then.

I remember a good deal of self-centered unionism. Some called it business unionism. Others called it bread-and-butter unionism. Whatever you called it, it's gone today.

Today you know that what you do has its effect on the whole American nation. You also know that what happens elsewhere in this country has its effect on you. The day of self-centered unionism is past.

You can be proud of what our democratic labor movement has done to lift American living standards . . . security . . . national unity.

I am pleased to say that the Officeworkers Union has lived up to labor's proud tradition.

You have recognized change and you have met it with vigor and imagination.

∟ There was a time, I know, that officeworkers thought they didn't need a union.

∟ But automation, technology and changing employment patterns have convinced the last doubter that officeworkers, too, need the strength and unity that can come from unionization.

∟ You know the facts. There are fewer and fewer blue-collar workers in America. There are more and more white-collar workers. Jobs for the unskilled are disappearing. Jobs for the skilled are growing.

∟ Today only 5 per cent of the entire American labor force is unskilled. But even 5 per cent is too much.

∟ ~~This pattern will perpetuate itself.~~

You in the Officeworkers Union have recognized change and have used it as your ally. Today you are organizing on a large scale. And you are centering your efforts where they will do the most good.

Yes, you have seized one of American unionism's greatest opportunities. Your work benefits not only your own members, but the nation as a whole.

And your concern is not only for your own members, but for all Americans.

Today, an unprecedented consensus exists in this nation -- a consensus among business and labor, North and South, farmers and city dwellers, white and Negro. This consensus says that all Americans should do all they can for all other Americans.

United we stand. And united we gain.

We gain in agreement:

That all Americans shall have equal voting rights.

That all Americans shall have an education which can give them the chance to lift themselves.

That older Americans shall have adequate medical care.

That American cities shall be better places in which to live and work.

That America's natural beauty, history and resources shall be preserved.

That America shall again open her doors to immigrants who can enrich and lend new vitality to our society.

That we shall help urban and rural Americans alike adjust to technological revolution and social change.

That we shall not drop the torch of international leadership.

We stand together in this nation ready to make the investments necessary so that all in our nation may contribute to the general welfare, so that all in our nation may share in that welfare.

We invest to put men on the Moon. We also invest to put men on their feet.

I call on you today, my friends, fellow workers in our common cause:

Continue your good work as union members and as citizens of this republic.

Retain your faith in the ability of free men -- developed to their fullest -- to build a better life for themselves and for others.

Keep your eyes ahead.

The dream that labor fought for 150 years ago is now in sight. Together we can make the Great Society real.

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HOWARD COUGHLIN  
PRESIDENT

[Transcript]

J. HOWARD HICKS  
SECRETARY-TREASURER

# OFFICE EMPLOYEES INTERNATIONAL UNION

AMERICAN FEDERATION OF LABOR AND CONGRESS OF INDUSTRIAL ORGANIZATIONS  
AND  
CANADIAN LABOUR CONGRESS

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY-TREASURER

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July 15, 1965

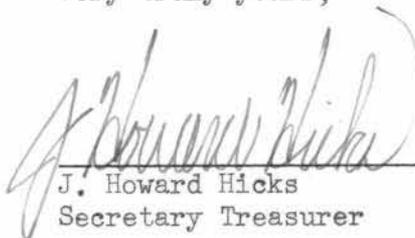
Mr. Frank Hall  
Office of the Vice President  
5121 New Senate Office Building  
Washington 25, D. C.

Dear Mr. Hall:

In response to your request of yesterday, I am happy to enclose photo copies of those pages of our recent San Francisco Convention transcript containing the address of Vice President Humphrey.

I hope this will be a worthwhile addition to the Vice President's files.

Very truly yours,

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
J. Howard Hicks  
Secretary Treasurer

JHH/jz  
Encl.

*Trans. of June 10, 1965*



PRESIDENT COUGHLIN: I am sorry to interrupt, but the Vice President is about to enter the hall.

[The audience arose and applauded as Vice President Hubert Humphrey was escorted into the meeting.]

PRESIDENT COUGHLIN: Ladies and Gentlemen of the Office Employees International Union: I am both pleased and proud to present to you the Vice President of the United States.

[Applause]

VICE PRESIDENT HUBERT HUMPHREY: Thanks very much, Mr. Coughlin. And my good friend, Howard Hicks, my long-time friend who was a colleague of mine in Congress and is now Mayor of this beautiful City of San Francisco, Mayor Shelley: It is good to be here with you and I want to thank the Office Employees, this wonderful fine union, for a welcoming banner I saw up there when I came into this room. You really made me feel very, very honored and very, very privileged to be in your midst and share this platform with you.

When I came in the door I saw that little girl over there that has a Campfire uniform on. Then I saw this other

little office worker here and I just said, "You know, that Coughlin and Hicks, they organized ~~x~~ them young."

[Laughter and applause]

Before I leave here I want to be sure I meet all these junior members. When my daughter was a little girl, she was a Blue Bird. Isn't that what you are? She was a Blue Bird, two years ago. You see the trouble is, daddies don't remember all these things. It is mothers who do.

I regret that we are a bit late getting to you, but transportation is not always as certain as you want, and besides that, I cheated a little bit this morning. I went out to my home in Minnesota where we are doing some remodeling. But after I saw the confusion, I told Mrs. Humphreys to stay there and manage the whole thing. [Laughter] I am sort of a supervisor from afar. I am not one of those who likes to be so close to all of that.

But we stayed there a little while and then boarded the plane and flew out here to this beautiful city.

I know you are having a fine convention and I am very proud of the fact at this convention are at least five or maybe more of our delegates from the Twin Cities in Minnesota. They were there to meet me when I entered the

hotel.

Let me just speak to you very briefly, because I have a full day. I have two more receptions to go to and a dinner tonight and I had better try and get on my way. I suppose that everybody feels that these are about the most exciting days that any generation ever experienced. Yesterday morning before I left Washington, D.C., I picked up the telephone and I called long-distance. The party that I was calling, the men on the other end of the line, were aboard an aircraft carrier, U.S.S. Wasp, and I just wanted to find out how Major McDivit and Major White were getting along and if they had any new instructions from their wives on recent days. [Laughter]

And what a world of communication we live in. Here was this ship at sea and I picked up that telephone and in a very few minutes I had Major McDivit on the phone and had a wonderful visit with him. And he told me of the thrill, of the exhilarating experience that was his in that space capsule. Then in a few moments I had the privilege of talking to Major White and very briefly he mentioned to me that incredible experience of walking out in space. It seems impossible. Really it does. If somebody had told you ten

years ago this was going to happen, you would have said, "Get that man taken to a hospital. This just can't happen." But this is the age of the miracle and this is the age of the impossibles and we are performing these miracles and these are just the beginnings.

I think one of the reasons I frequently mention the young people is because they are going to live to see things that we and the adults in our wildest moments of imagination never dreamed possible. The space age, the atomic age, this age in which we live, is the pioneer age. We are just getting started on so many things. And when I think of these two little girls that I mentioned here, they will at the age of their parents be witnessing man in orbit, living in orbit; man-operated, man-orbiting laboratories.

I am sure it will by then be quite commonplace to be able to make trips to the moon. We will be repairing satellites in orbit just like you repair your car over at the garage or the filling station.

It seems almost impossible to say that, but that is a fact. In other words, when we put up one of these satellites such as the Early Bird, where we transmit television pictures from all over the world, let's say that something

goes a little wrong with it. Well you don't have to bring the whole blame thing down, you just send somebody up to fix it. That will happen. It will happen and it won't be long. It will be just about the time that young girl out there graduates from high school or before. That is the kind of a world we are living in.

Now we are living in another kind of world, too, in which the pace of technology and science changes jobs and changes the economy. There are fewer, for example, unskilled workers today in the labor force than ever before and even the number we have is almost too many because what we need are skilled workers. We need people who are in the white collar group. We need people in the services, in the professions, people that are in management and people who aid and assist in the services such as office employes. There are no more industrial workers today despite the fabulous output of our factories than there were 30 years ago. But there are so many more of what we call the services, the service employes, repair, secretarial and many, many other occupations that make up what we call service.

We are also finding out now that it isn't good enough just to be healthy, it isn't good enough just to want

to work. It isn't good enough just to say, "I am available for work." People say, "Well, what can you do?" Therefore we have to train people today. This is why education is so important.

Yesterday I gave a commencement address at Fordham University. I jokingly said that between the first of June and June 15 you mustn't hold anybody in government accountable because we are so busy making commencement addresses. But this is the time when our young people graduate from universities. This is a time when our young people graduate from high schools. And in the lifetime of many of us in this room, if you had an eighth grade education, you would get along fairly well, and surely if you had a high school education, you would make it real well. But in the days ahead, in the lifetime of the young ladies I have mentioned, these two lovely little girls here, they are going to have to have a technical education, professional education, college education or at least one or two years of what we call community college, or be very gifted and very lucky.

And this is why today we are reaching into the American economy and the American community to try to help lift the standards. Very frankly a nation can't be of the

space age with people that drop the monkey wrench. You can't be in the space age if you are not excellent. You can't get up there, you know, and when they are flying around up in space and they say, "Well, it is all right," that means they are at the end of the line. It is not all right, it's all over. That is why the space man says, "A-OK, go, go, go," not just "O.K." O.K. means he is in trouble.

We have to have better performance, better standards than ever before and for man to compete with machines, he has to be better than ever before; for him to use machines he has to be better than ever before. So we are now engaged in a tremendous program of trying to upgrade the standards of American education, upgrade man power training, upgrade vocational education, upgrade the whole performance level of the American people and the American economy. And we are doing a pretty good job of it, and you are at the head of the list right here.

The people in this union represent people of high standards of quality and one of the reasons I wanted to come to your union and readily accepted your invitation is in a period of change you have come to grips with it. You are organizing, and by the way, if you ever needed a union, you

need it now, in this period of change.

[Applause]

And your union is not just one that thinks of itself. It thinks of the country, it thinks of the total economy, and this again, may I say, is one of the most rewarding developments, one of the most encouraging developments in American life. I have gone all around this country speaking to trade unions and industrial unions, speaking to people in the professions and semi-skilled and skilled workers and what do I find? Yes, you are interested in your pay check, you are interested in your working conditions, but you are interested in where you are going to live, what kind of a city you are going to live in, how your children are going to get along, what kind of an education they are going to have, can we do something about the problems of disease.

I look out across this room and I can honestly say to you if we make the breakthroughs we hope we will in the next few years in heart disease, cancer and stroke, many of you will live a much better and healthier and longer life. And if we don't, many of you will not be with us. One out of every four will be a victim of cancer, and I give you the benefit of the doubt. And it is something to break your

heart, because I remember when our boy, when I found out that he had a malignancy, believe me, I wanted to do something about it. And we are going to do something about it.

When I think of what we could do to prevent stroke -- many a person is stricken right in the prime of life just about the time they are ready to do something and ~~bango~~<sup>bingo</sup>. Now there are warning signs and we can detect those warning signs and we can do something about it. But we are going to have to go to work at it and that is what your Government is doing. That is what we are doing in this massive program of medical research that you are going to help pay for as taxpayers. But it is an investment, and that investment will come back to you in dividends of happiness, health and jobs and a richer economy -- a tremendous dividend.

We are going to pour another billion, 300 million dollars into education this year at the Federal level. For whom? For your children. And we are going to provide for higher education, because we are going to have 3 million more youngsters in college by 1970 than we have right now; 3 million, my dear friends. We have more 16-year-olds this year than the total number of 18- and 19-year-olds in the last ten years. Thirty per cent of the entire population of

this country in the next four years will be under 25. Boy, are we doing things, if you know what I mean! [Laughter]

So let me just say that this is a changing world and it can be a better one. It all depends on what man wills it to be. And one of the things that encourages me so much is the sense of understanding and unity that seems to be growing in our country. We don't have the same old bitterness. Oh, there is some bitterness, there are some of the old haters left. There are a few, but they are in the minority. They come and they go. We have a few people who hate people because of their religion, because of their race, because of their name, because they have an accent or something else. But there are only a few and those few are out of step with the ~~money~~<sup>man</sup> They are the odd balls.

[Appluse]

Now I am not sure what the history books will say when the Johnson-Humphrey Administration completes its first four years, but I hope the book will say this, "That this President and his Vice President tried to unite a country, to get people to work together, to get them to lift themselves to higher levels of performance and standards of conduct, to make America a little stronger, a little richer in spirit as

well as in goods, to get us to be a little more tolerant of one another, a little more understanding of the other fellow, a little more appreciative of what the other person has to offer if he is but given a chance.

We are determined to open the gates of opportunity in this country. I happen to believe that in the uneducated may very well be the secret, the answer to some of the problems of our time. I often think of when I learned that 10% of the highest level graduates of our high schools, of the highest groups, that a group of them, let's see, it was about 400,000 never went on to college, of the best students. I said, "I will bet you, in the mind of one or more of those best students that never went to college, had that person gone to a science school or medical school or to some program, ~~he~~ <sup>he</sup> might have found the answer to some of these curses and diseases that affect us. Maybe he would have found a way to ease our burdens in many of our daily lives."

So we are going to get people busy about doing something to lift themselves and their country and that is what I am here to talk to you about, and I am not going to stay any longer. I merely want to say, "America is a better country, a richer country, a happier country because workers, people

who are in our shops and factories and offices, that they have their unions, that they engage in collective bargaining, they have help lift the standards of industry as well as the standards of living and that this great interplay of forces between management and the worker has been good for all."

Remember what old Sam Gompers used to say -- Sam Gompers was a pretty good worker, too, and a pretty good representative of the working many. He once said, "The greatest crime against the working man is a business that fails to make a profit." And that is why this Administration is concerned about business just as we are about workers, because you don't help a worker by just getting up and calling businessmen economic exploiters and you don't help workers or business by calling workers labor bosses. You haven't heard from the White House or from the Vice President words of condemnation of people in management or in labor. We feel there are enough people that are rousing the passions of people. We would prefer to have management taking the civic responsibilities and at the same time know they have a right to make a profit and we would like to help them make a profit. We believe in profit. But we also believe that business management has a responsibility to the community.

We believe and we like to help workers get a better wage. We would like to have them have better working conditions. We would like to see that they have better fringe benefits. But we also believe a worker is interested in his family, in his country, and we want that union to be interested in the country, in education, in health, in rebuilding our cities and in our foreign policy, in our national security, because when it is all said and done, whatever church you may attend or whoever you may be or whether you are in business or in this union, you first of all are a citizen of the United States.

[Applause]

And I have a feeling that ~~that~~ American citizenship is very precious to you in all that it means and I have a feeling that because you a member of this union, you are a better citizen and because you are an American citizen you are a better unionist.

Thank you very, very much.

[The audience arose and applauded.]

PRESIDENT COUGHLIN: Mr. Vice President, on behalf of all of the delegates to the Office Employes International Union, we want to thank you from the bottom of our hearts



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