

REMARKS

VICE PRESIDENT HUBERT HUMPHREY

DEDICATION OF ALASKA WATER LABORATORY

COLLEGE, ALASKA

NOVEMBER 2, 1965

The water laboratory we are dedicating today represents a long-term investment in Alaska's most important resources -- its people and its water.

This splendid new facility symbolizes our determination that the rivers of Alaska will not go the way of so many of our rivers on the mainland.

I can't help thinking of how much better off we would be today if we had had the foresight years ago to establish laboratories like this one to serve the Hudson, the Ohio, the Missouri, the Mississippi or the Potomac.

Surely our water problems today would be more manageable if we had devised comprehensive plans for our major waterways...If we had accounted for all the use to which they are put...If we had developed strict regulations for disposal of waste products...Or, if we had developed more river basins, dams and irrigation systems.

America's growth and technological progress rely upon water resources. Forty per cent of our water is used by industry. (For example, it takes 600,000 gallons of water to make a ton of synthetic rubber; 65,000 gallons to produce a ton of steel).

My friends, the earth has as much water now as it ever had -- no more, but no less. Yet, we have blatantly robbed ourselves of important water sources by creating our own tidal wave of pollution.

Industrial wastes and raw sewage have reduced many of our most important rivers and lakes into foul, evil reservoirs of filth.

We allowed abandoned mines to remain unsealed in Appalachia, so acid drainoff has polluted hundred of miles of streams, lakes and rivers.

Our once proud and beautiful Great Lakes are now the watery dumping grounds of our industrialized society.

We are learning the high cost of pollution -- literally and figuratively. We estimate that it will cost more than 40 billion dollars over the next decade to clean up our waterways.

Hindsight is no substitute for insight. This laboratory will help to insure that these mistakes are not repeated in Alaska.

We must not permit the development of Alaska's forests and minerals or the inevitable growth of its cities to create conditions of water pollution that have occurred elsewhere.

During the next two or three years, other regional laboratories like this one will be constructed in Athens, Georgia; Boston; Ann Arbor, Michigan; Ada, Oklahoma and Corvallis, Oregon. A laboratory to develop quality criteria for fresh water uses will be located in Duluth, Minnesota; and one for salt water uses at Kingston, Rhode Island.

All of these facilities will be cooperating with each other and with industry, municipalities, and public and private institutions -- in one of the great struggles of our time: the renovation of water that has been polluted.

President Johnson and the Congress recognize the importance of conserving our water resources to help achieve the goal of the Great Society.

We have created a Presidential Water Resources Council to oversee national and regional policies, plans, programs and needs.

We have also established Federal-State river basin commissions to plan and maintain regional water supply programs.

We have authorized federal grants of 50 million dollars a year for sewage and water facilities serving communities of less than 5,000 people.

And the Omnibus Housing Act authorizes 700 million dollars in fifty-per-cent federal matching grants over the next four years for municipal water and sewage collection facilities.

We are living at a time of maximum opportunity. We have the resources, the talent and the ability to instill quality in every area of our existence.

We can reconvert our waterways not only to increase industrial usage or public consumption levels -- but to create new recreation opportunities for our people.

How many years has it been since children swam safely in the Hudson River? How many years, since people fished in the waters of the Ohio River?

We are determined to put an end to the waste and destruction of our water supply. Water is our most precious natural resource, and we are entrusted to preserve and protect it for the next and succeeding generations.

This ceremony today indicates that we are aware of our responsibilities. We are prepared not only to rectify our past mistakes, but to discover new ways and new techniques to keep water abundant for decades ahead.

Conservation of resources is really conservation of human life. The two go hand in hand. We have learned the high cost of spoilage. We are now learning the deep satisfaction of conservation. And by so doing, we are keeping the faith of all the American people.

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