

REMARKS

Jim Scheuer
Jonathan Bingham
at New Louis

VICE PRESIDENT HUBERT HUMPHREY

Lefkowitz

CONSUMER EDUCATION CONFERENCE

BRONX, NEW YORK

Esther Peterson

DECEMBER 7, 1965

Herman Badillo

Today's Consumer Conference is not an isolated event in the 21st Congressional District. It is part of a nationwide program by the Administration of President Johnson to make life better, more rewarding, more enjoyable for our people.

This meeting and panel sessions which will follow are part of a comprehensive Washington-to-New York program developed by Jim Scheuer.

His aim -- and his success -- have been to bring the services of federal agencies to the Grand Concourse -- and to every street, every apartment house, every private home in this District.

Jim Scheuer is a great battler for progressive causes; but he also believes in putting progressive laws into action, and in working with federal agencies so that we apply the laws and the appropriations which have been enacted for the people's benefit.

Your government exists to serve you. This is the most consumer-minded Administration in our history.

h I am particularly pleased to share this platform with the President's Special Assistant on Consumer Affairs, who has done more than any other single public servant to carry out the President's consumer program -- "Mrs. Consumer Champion," Esther Peterson.

z A few weeks ago, it was my privilege to convey President Johnson's greetings to the Consumers' Advisory Council. z In his statement the President pointed to notable progress -- increase in the nationwide level of wages and salaries, in purchasing power, in consumption, ^{yet} a general holding of the line on prices.

He cited the impressive record of hundreds of millions of dollars in savings in the form of ^{utility} rate reductions, as achieved by the Federal Communication Commission on telephone bills; the Civil Aeronautics Board with respect to airline fares; the Federal Power Commission on natural gas charges. The President said, however:

↳ "This is not the time to look back in self-satisfaction, it is the time to look ahead."

↳ He stressed our Administration's intention to support the Congress in moving toward more adequate consumer legislation."

Jim Scherer this Legist

↳ This includes greater truth in packaging,
preventing deception in labeling and containers.

↳ This includes truth-in-lending, so that consumers
can compare costs of credit and avoid the personal
tragedy of being overburdened with debt.

↳ The Second Session of the 89th Congress will,
with your support, approve pending Bills for
additional protection of the health of our people.

↳ It can do so by authorizing pre-marketing protection
on non-prescription drugs and on medical devices
and cosmetics, just as, in 1962, we enacted the
Kefauver-Harris Law for protection on prescription
drugs.

These actions are not only pro-consumer; they are pro-business. Modern, enlightened free enterprise recognizes its responsibilities to market the best products at the most reasonable ^{competitive} prices.

Public-spirited corporations prize their reputation for excellence for high quality goods and services, especially when the public health is involved.

The American economy has produced and distributed more and better quality goods and services for more people at more reasonable prices than any nation in history.

But good products offered with responsible advertising may sometimes be outsold by sub-standard goods from a few firms which violate ethics, mis-represent and deceive.

↳ The unwary consumer can be short-changed --
often with tragic economic, health and other
results.

↳ How often have we seen and read instances of
old people defrauded of life savings by high-pressure
promoters;

Winners of the poor, hoodwinked by worthless
products which they bought at outrageous prices
and interest charges;

All know of seriously ill people who have done suffered
irreparable harm by medicating themselves with
worthless nostrums or going to quacks for "cures."

yes ↳ Much progress has been made in protecting the
public, but much more must be done, especially
against more subtle types of deception.

↳ Our special interest must be to protect those
who are least able to protect themselves, such as
the under-educated. the poor.

↳ We have a special obligation to the low-income
breadwinner who must live from paycheck to pay-
check ...to the sick, the handicapped, the helpless
who must live from welfare check to welfare check...
the retired couple, the widower or widow who must
live from pension check to pension check.

↳ That is why the U.S. Office of Economic
Opportunity has made 16 grants, totalling over
893 thousand dollars, for the development of consumer
education programs throughout the country.

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∟ The war against poverty cannot be won unless Americans who are not considered "poor," but whose meager income and savings must be stretched so thinly that every dollar counts. ∟ Educating them -- to their rights, their opportunities -- is indispensable to their happier tomorrow.

∟ No one has ever better expressed the rights of the consumer than our late President John F. Kennedy. On March 15, 1962, in the first Consumer Message ever sent by a Chief Executive to the Congress,

∟ President Kennedy emphasized these four Consumer rights: --

- the right to be informed
- the right to choose
- the right to be heard
- the right to safety.

Through the President's Committee on Consumer's
Interests, including the Consumer Advisory Council, *and Esther Peterson*
these rights are on the way to fuller realization.

And, under President Johnson's leadership,
the 89th Congress has enacted historic laws which
will, in a broader sense, make these rights more
secure.

The law says Social Security Amendments, but
it means - not merely Medicare - but that "you
shall have adequate health care -- in dignity --
in your elder years."

Two laws say, Department of Housing and Urban
Development and Housing Amendments, but they
mean, "You can live in something more than concrete
and carbon monoxide."

"Your children can grow up in attractive surroundings and can play in safety. Old buildings and *sed* neighborhoods can be renovated, rather than allowed to decay. Your traffic can move at reasonable speed."

↳ The law says Elementary and Secondary Act, but it means, "Every child -- of every religion, every race or color -- shall have an equal chance to learn, to grow, to aspire."

↳ The law says Economic Opportunity Amendments, but it means "Every human being -- from a pre-school toddler to a school-drop-out to an elderly, disabled man or woman shall be helped to break out of the cycle of poverty and misery."

↳ The law says Voting Rights, but it means "You shall be given full citizenship, no matter what the color of your skin, after promises broken for a hundred years."

↳ The laws say Law Enforcement Assistance Act and Federal Crime Commission, but they mean "You shall be able to walk in safety on your streets and to be safe in your home. We will find bold, new approaches to lower the incidence of crime and to break the pattern of prisons becoming training grounds for new crimes."

Call the roll of these and other great humanitarian laws enacted by the 89th Congress, and you will find in every instance that Jim Scheuer not only fought to enact them, but is fighting now to assure their fullest application in your daily lives.

But the final success of all these efforts depends on how you use new laws, new tools where you live. Use them well.

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TRANSCRIPT OF SPEECH BY
VICE-PRESIDENT HUBERT H. HUMPHREY
CONFERENCE ON CONSUMER EDUCATION
December 7, 1965
Concourse Plaza Hotel

Thank you very much. My good friend and Congressman, James Scheuer, it's a very exhilarating experience to sit in the back of the room and hear you introduce me. It starts the day off very well as far as I'm concerned. I suppose that I could well use a little story that President Johnson told one time when he was being introduced in such flattering comments. He said that, "My father would have enjoyed it, and my mother would have believed it." But I'm going to surely come here as often as I can when my spirits are low just to have Jim Scheuer,..... just to have my friend Jim Scheuer to pump me up once again and make me feel fit for the day's work.

I do want to commend the co-chairmen of this Consumer Education Conference, Mr. Pekowsky and Mrs. Parker, and I'm so pleased to be in the presence and association with my two good friends of Congress, Congressman James Scheuer, and Congressman Jonathan Jack Bingham, and the Attorney General, the distinguished Attorney General of this state who has fought the good fight for the consumer and for others, Louis Lefkowitz. And I'm so happy to see my friend Esther Peterson. We worked together

many years; it's a real joy to be with her. And Herman, Herman Badillo and Hubert Humphrey were in San Juan only a few days ago for a little gathering of the faithful; namely, the democrats down there.....we have , you don't mind..... Louis is a broad-minded man and he wouldn't mind at all that I make some indefense like that.

The Assemblymen that are here, including sponsoring organizations, and particularly as I read, my memory is correct, it is Assemblyman Seymour Posner, that is the Assemblyman for this district; is that correct? To all of you that have come here, may I first of all congratulate you on this important meeting. Because it is an important meeting, I said to the television people here just a moment ago, that I hope that the initiative which has been taken here, this important Conference on Consumer Education of the 21st Congressional District of New York, here in the Bronx, that it is something that will become a national pattern and will not be just an isolated event. Every member of congress will be a great favor for his constituents and constituents, if they would take a page out of the book of this conference and repeat it in every congressional district in America. I know of no better service that a member of congress could perform for the people of the United States, than to appoint themselves, so to speak, as the coordinator in their history of Consumer Education. This is both adult education and juvenile education.

Because so many of our youngsters these days, have their own change with which to do their shopping. Therefore, it's in a conference such as this, gets an opportunity for a congressman to truly serve all of his constituents; cutting across party lines, ethnic groups, economic groups, we serve everybody; because it is a fact that everyone, of course, is a consumer. And we are entitled as citizens and consumers, equality; equality in everything that we put in our minds to, or put our hands to. Equality in our lives, which we'll have to earn and deserve, equality in our goods and services which we purchase with our income or with our labor.

This conference is, in fact, not an isolated event. It is a part of a nationwide program by the administration of President Johnson, to make life a little better, more rewarding, and more enjoyable for our people; this is what we mean by the great society. Just to make our lives a little richer, fuller, more meaningful, rather than just to pile up the quantity of goods, rather to enhance the quality of goods and supplies. This is really what we're trying to do in the whole area, whole area of public services; education, human rights, health, consumer protection; the many things that are being tried today, some of them on an experimental basis, others on a continuing basis. We're trying to up-grade the performance and the standards of America. That's the only reason those

two astronauts are still in orbit, because we up-graded science in this country, and technology. I happen to be chairman of the Space Council. It coordinates all of our activities of our government that deal with space. I can tell you that the only reason that we are able to put these men into orbit safely, never have lost an astronaut, not even have had a serious accident because excellence is the standard, nothing less than that; check it out a hundred times, to make sure we know what we are doing; provide the proper environment for those astronauts although in outer space so that they can live and live well. I'm of the opinion that a nation that could take such a keen interest in excellence of performance in space and providing a wholesome environment for two astronauts in space, ought to also be willing to spend some effort and make some investment to provide for excellence of living on earth, and a proper environment for man on earth. But the truth is at least for some time, most of us are going to be here. I think that Mr. Scheuer and I may have a couple of candidates we would invite but, I really believe that our interest needs to be divided in a sense, where we give interest to both our exploration of the unknown, and our enjoyment of the known. This meeting and panel sessions which will follow, and already many of them you had are a part of this comprehensive Washington to New York program developed by Jim Scheuer, backed by

Jack Bingham, and _____ a program at which there's interest as I've noticed by many sponsoring and coordinating and cooperating organizations. Congressman Scheuer's aim and his success had been to bring the services of federal agencies to the Grand Concourse, to every street, to every private home, and apartment house in his district, and if ever a congressman deserved a medal of honor for serving his people, this congressman does. Jim Scheuer is a battler for progressive causes; I know, I've been in some of the battles with him. I heard his introduction here today. And his introduction of me and the recitation of some of the activities which the Vice-President has been involved, and I might add that Jim Scheuer has given his time and life to. Everyone of us has to be a pioneer some time in our lives; once in a while a few of us might have over did it a little. I still occasionally wake up with a bruise or two in this arm; it has a bit of pain and has yet to be healed, but I take great joy as presiding officer of the Senate, to see item after item of legislation being passed that was fought for for years. You have to plant the seed; you have to tend to the field, whether it's in agriculture or in politics or in public services. And we do not get these programs by wishing for them, and we do not get these public services by just saying it's a good idea. You get them by working, persevering, insisting,

learning, proselyting, advocating, and finally, there is intuition to reap a harvest. Jim, I think that we have seen a rather plentiful harvest in the April Session of the 89th Congress.

What I like best about this congressman, and about Jack as well, Jack Bingham, is that these people believe in putting progressive laws into action. The laws are no better than their use. The laws are no better than how they are applied and in the spirit in which they are applied. And I'm delighted to see that these congressmen are working with federal agencies to see that we apply the laws and appropriations which have been enacted for the people's benefit. Now the fact is that this Government exist for only one purpose; to serve you. Thomas Jefferson once said, "The only legitimate aim of the Government is to serve the people, to protect their health and welfare". I want you to know that that is my aim. I'm in public service for just one reason: that I believe that this is the best way that I know of for myself to be able to fulfill my mission of service which everyone of us has; a mission of service. In some way, somehow, whatever our trade, profession, occupation, it should be looked upon as a part of a mission of service. This administration, I truly believe, is the most consumer oriented, and consumer-minded administration in our history. It started with the late President Kennedy, and it

has been continued under President Lyndon Johnson. And I, as I've indicated here already, am delighted to share this platform with the President's special assistant on Consumer Affairs. We office in the same building, the executive office building. We, neither one of us, are in the White House, we're just close by; just across the street. But close enough may I say to get orders, and close enough to carry them out. And happily may I say, close enough in every way to be on the same wave-link with the President of the United States. The President's special assistant on Consumer Affairs has done more than any other single public servant to carry out the President's Consumer Program. And I just labeled her this morning, and this is what you might call an honest and fair labeling act. I call her Mrs. Consumer Champion, Esther Peterson. You know, I've been with Esther on the program before. We've been before the advertising council; we've been before many of the business groups, the labor groups and many others. And I know in the beginning that many people were taking a good look at Esther Peterson's and say now I wonder what she is going to do with us. I bet she is against us. They came around to understand that what Esther Peterson was doing was trying to work with them. With them on high standards; to up-grade their performance. And the very people who gave her a quizzical look, two years ago, are now saying, "come see us Esther. We want to talk to you,

we want to work with you", and that is a factual statement; I have witnessed it from doubt and suspicion of confidence and support, of Mrs. Consumer Champion.

A few weeks ago, it was my privilege to convey President Johnson's greetings to the Consumers Advisory Council. During these recent weeks you know I've had the chance to do many things which our President wanted to do, but which for a very brief period of time, he was indisposed and unable. And in his statement, I read the President's statement to this Advisory Council, the president pointed to the notable progress; the increase in the nationwide level of wages and salary, in purchasing power, in consumption and yet a general, holding of the line on prices. And this administration is concerned about all of these matters. I said to the reporter here, that the mortal enemy of the consumer is inflation. Anybody in this audience that has a dollar saved in an insurance policy or in a health and welfare trust fund, or in a bank, just let the price wage picture get out of balance in the country. Everybody just grabbing for what they can get today, and your savings will be of little value. We live in a highly, follical, active economy with tremendous pressures on America all the time. International pressures which affect our market, which affect our price structure, which affect our supplies, which affect our goods and services. Emotions don't isolate us

at all anymore, they are just condiments. You just have no idea until you start to take a look at it. Tremendous number of forces that are at work all the time. They could literally cause this economy to explode unless it is carefully supervised, watched, cared for, and in a very real sense I would say nurtured, so that it doesn't become weak or get out of hand. The President cited an impressive record of hundreds of millions of dollars in savings to the consumer in the form of utility rate reductions. These reductions come and sometime you just hardly even know that they are happening, but they are there. You know it's an interesting thing, I found out when I was Mayor of Indianapolis, that anytime the rate would go up, everybody knew it, and when the rate went down I never got a letter. I don't know why that is! I used to think that maybe because the ladies weren't telling their husbands when they paid those bills. You know it was sorta like my grandmother, she always cheated on granddad; she had the, what we used to call, the egg money you know; back in the days out on the farm. She always saved a couple dozen out of the crate you know, the old man never knew about. And grandma would have that money for the grandchildren. So I figured that once in a while when these rate reductions came through, that the housewives who were paying those bills just didn't tell the boss. I don't mean the boss, excuse me, I mean didn't tell the man in the house; she was telling the boss alright. Well these rate reductions were achieved by

the Federal Communication Commission on telephone bills, the Civil Aeronautics Board with respect to airline fares, the Federal power Commission on natural gas charges, and there have been hundred millions of dollars in rebates from some of these. And some rather appreciable reductions. The President said, however, this is not the time to look back in self-satisfaction, it's time to look ahead. I never known a man that had so little interest in what you had done yesterday. Every time I talk to the President and recite to him what I'd been doing, you know so that I get merit, merit points, he said very good Hubert, but what are you going to do about this tomorrow, and the next day; it's sorta like why did I do it. Only you must continue on, and that's the kind of attitude that we need. You can't do anything about the yesterdays. We have to think about today and tomorrow. The President stressed the administration's intention and commitment to support the congress, and moving toward more consumer legislation. And right on this platform our Congressmen that are the advocates of very important consumer protection legislation. And might I add that your two Senators, Senator Kennedy, and Senator Javits are both firm advocates of consumer protection legislation. Senator Phil Hart of Michigan, has been the leader in the Senate by the fact of his committee assignments and his interest, along with Senator Paul Douglas. These are great champions of the consumer. Now this new legislation

includes the Greater Truth in Packaging Program, preventing deception and labelings and containers. This includes truth in lending, so that consumers can compare cost credit and avoid the personal tragedy of being overburdened with debt. The 2nd Session of the 89th Congress will with your support and I repeat, with your support which requires your understanding. Approved pending bills or additional protection of the consumer welfare and the health of our people. And it can do so by passing some of these proposals I've mentioned, and by authorizing pre-marketing protection on non-prescription drugs, on medical devices and cosmetics. Just as in 1962 we enacted the Kefauver-Harris Law for protection on prescription drugs. I had a bit of a hand in that as an interested person. I thought it was legislation that was needed, and I'm now sure that even the opponents have found it to be in the national interest, and in their interest. Now these actions are not only pro-consumer, they are pro-business, pro-labor and pro, I would like to say pro-bono-publical, for the people. Modern enlightened free enterprise recognizes its responsibilities to market the best products at the most reasonable competitive prices. Public spirited, respected corporations prize their reputations for excellence, for high quality goods and services; especially when the public health is involved. Therefore, you can expect the support at least the respect and cooperation of these public-spirited corporations. The American economy has produced

and distributed more and better quality goods and services for more people at more reasonable prices than any nation in our history. And I want that statement to sink in, because I hear a great deal of comment about our country that is sometimes not as complimentary as I should like it. But let it be crystal clear when it comes, for example, to food. The American consumer gets a better bargain in food than any consumer in the world. A smaller percentage of his income goes for food than any country in the world by far. Not only that, but you have a variety that nobody in the world has. It's an amazing bargain and it has been. I came from the Midwest and I used to say, and it's still somewhat true, but not nearly as much as it once was, that that farmer has been subsidizing us for a long time, and he had. I can remember in my state, my dear friends, when a dozen eggs on the farm, grade A top, large 21 cents. By the time they got to market they were a little more than that, but that's what Mr. Farmer got. We get a fine bargain in our market place and our food basket. We're getting a better bargain in terms of quality goods all the way down the line, if you look for quality. But good products offered with responsible advertising may sometime be out-sold by sub-standard goods from a few firms which violate ethics, misrepresent and deceive; and here's where consumer education comes in. Let me tell you as one who has been bought with the business house and community, you can't, you don't get

anything for nothing. Just remember this, if somebody sells you something at below cost, he has to hook somebody else. Don't forget it, because you can't pay the rent, pay the taxes, pay the help, take care of the upkeep, by selling less than cost. It's just impossible. Somebody, somewhere along the line pays that bill. You may be the one that gets the advantage for a moment, but somebody else gets the business, in quotes, a little bit latter. There isn't doubt about that, this is exactly like a working man. Some people thing that it's all to your advantage to get a cheap wage, get a fellow that will work for little or nothing. Temporarily that may be to your advantage, but if you have cheap wages you're gonna have poor business. And it's, I guess that point is emphasized adequately.

My friends may I say that my friends in the union department just wanted that point to be properly emphasized. Now the unworried consumer can be short changed often with tragic economic, health, and other results. How often have we seen and read instances of old people defrauded of life savings by high pressure promoters. We read of the poor hoodlinked by worthless products which they bought at outrageous prices and interests charges. We know of seriously ill people who have suffered irreparable damage and harm by medicating themselves with worthless nostrants or going to quacks for cures. This is one of the national tragedies. It's really unbelievable

what can happen. Much progress, fortunately, has been made in protecting the public. There are many voluntary organizations which are helpful in this. And now your Government takes a greater interest. But much more must be done, and if you don't believe so ask Esther Peterson. She knows that much more must be done because she has witnessed this deceit, she has witnessed how some people do not live by a code of ethics. She also knows how our great companies, many of them, do live by that code of ethics. So we are engaged in a process now of education. Our special interest should be to protect those who are least able to protect themselves; such as, the poor on many occasion, and the undereducated. And we have a special obligation to the low income bread winner, who must live from pay check to pay check; to the sick, the handicapped, the helpless, who must live from welfare check to welfare check; the retired couple, we surely have an obligation to; the widow or widower who must live from pension check to pension check. And this is why the U.S. Office of Economic Opportunity, the war on poverty office, has made 16 substantial grants totalling now over \$893,000 for the development of Consumer Education Programs throughout the country. This is the first time this has ever been done. And I want to say that I think that this is one of the most effective things that we're doing in the war on poverty; to educate people, to know the product, to understand the workings of a market

place, to explain to them what is meant by credit, what they have to pay for, to know a little bit more about the quality of goods and services that are available or are not available. And this war against poverty cannot be won unless Americans who are not considered, in terms of some definitions, poor, but whose meager income savings must be stretched so thinly that every dollar counts. Educating them to their rights, to their opportunities is indispensable to their happiness tomorrow. And you good people who are in this audience today have it as your obligation to become self-appointed teachers in this program of consumer education. I can't think of a single thing that would be more helpful to a wage earner today. For his union, or for the company with which he works. Nor could I think of a single thing that a political party could do this morning that's more important, republican or democrat, than to try to advise and educate the constituency, the people, in reference to consumer education. I think this would be a blessing second to none. It would literally be like putting money in your pocket and giving you a chance to make a better use of your resources. And no one has better expressed the rights of the consumer than our late President John Kennedy. On March 15, 1962, in the first consumer message ever sent by a chief executive to the Congress, President Kennedy emphasized four consumer rights. These four rights are now a part of our law. They are fully subscribed to, adhered to, and promoted,

and may I say effectuated by the President of the United States, President Johnson. What are those rights for the consumer: The right to be informed. The right to Choose. The right to be heard, and the right to safety. And believe me the right to be informed is our task is to see that that right is meaningful. And the right to choose can only come if people know and have knowledge and understanding. And the right to be heard, that's what this meeting is about, and others. And to be heard before the commissions and agencies of government. And the right to safety is why we have food and drug administration; the Department of Agriculture, the Department of Commerce, this special office on Consumers Affairs. And through the President's committee on consumer interest, including a consumer advisory council and Esther Peterson. These rights are on their way to fuller realization. And under President Johnson's leadership, the second session of the 89th Congress will go to work in a broader program. And the first session has already enacted historic laws which will in a broader sense, make these rights more secure. Let me just give you a quick example, and then I'll leave you.

The law says, the recent law of the congress, social security amendments, that's what you read about; the Social Security Act was amended. But what it really means is not merely medicare, but what it does mean if it's properly administered, is that you should have adequate health care, and dignity in

your elder years. And our task as a citizen and as a Government is to make sure that that medicare program really works; that we have the hospitals that we need, the nursing homes that we need, and the doctors that we need, and the nurses that we need, and the medical technicians. Otherwise, these laws are merely statements of purpose. And I have a feeling that in the months ahead we are going to find out that we are short of hospitals. Not enough hospital beds. And I think that we are going to find that we need better nursing homes, at least in many areas. I know that we need many nurses. And any of you that have a daughter here today, please encourage that girl to enter into either teaching, education or nursing, or medical technician. We desperately need them. We need them today as I can think of no profession that's known. And we are going to need people in all of the healing arts; all the way down the line; with a growing population, with growing needs and with specialization we are going to need them. This is the way we protect the consumer, you don't protect the consumer by just having a speech and say we ought to do it, or even passing a law and saying here we are to take care of the elderly. Because the best law in the world doesn't mean a thing unless you have the best people to administer it, and to put it into operation. And I am sure that as the Congressmen return to their task, they are going to find out a year from now, six months from now, or maybe they already

know, that in many areas of our country there is, no matter how kind the government may be, how compassionate our people may be, no matter what the law may say in terms of medicare, that there are going to be shortages of doctors, hospital beds, and other facilities unless we take the action to make sure that those shortages are overcome.

So a law carries with it a message and a mandate. There are two laws, for example, the Department of Housing and Urban Development, and then the Housing Amendments. Laws that embrace eight billion dollars, eight billion dollars worth of Federal Aid to our cities. To make our cities liveable. But what they really mean, those laws, is that you can and should live in something more than concrete and carbon monoxide. Ladies and Gentlemen, this I think is one of the greatest challenges to the American people today; to make our cities everything that a city ought to be. You know the concept of a city, the ideas of a city in years gone by was that it would be a haven of beauty, culture, of good living. When you read about the city, you spoke of the finest that man was able to create. And we've let many of our cities, at least parts of them, be eroded and corroded and become obsolete so that they are not fit places for people to live in. I mentioned a moment ago about the environment that we tried to create for our astronauts, and I would, you'd be surprised how much it cost in time and effort and resources, to provide an environment

in that space capsule for two men. I wish we get you as excited about the environment in the Bronx, or in Minneapolis or some place else. Man wasn't intended to live on concrete and asphalt all the time. He wasn't created to be locked in a prison of brick and mortar. He was intended to have fresh water, and it is available you know, all we need to do is distribute it. He was intended to have fresh air, and that's available too. You ought not to have to go 40,000 feet above the city to get it, but it is available. And he was intended to have green grass. He was intended to be somewhat close to the earth, at least part of the time. He was intended also to have living space. There is a lot of room in this great country; you don't have to pile on top of each other. We're going to learn how to build our cities; either that or we're going to bury ourselves under a mass of brick and concrete and asphalt. I'm one to believe that time is of hand for the major effort, for the major effort of modern government; to make our cities not only liveable, but enjoyable. Centers of happiness, centers of culture, centers of interest for people who want to indulge in what we call the pursuit of happiness, which by the way is one of these basic rights which the founding fathers talked about. Well now, when we speak of these city improvements, what we are really saying is that your children can grow up in attractive surroundings and can play in safety. Old buildings and old neighborhoods can be renovated,

rather than allow to decay. And the traffic can move; yes it really could you know, at reasonable speed. Any nation that can figure out a supersonic airplane that can take off and land safely, and travel at over 2,000 miles an hour, or any nation that can figure out how to go into outer space and how to couple and decouple two space capsules, and land at a pre-designed and pre-proclaimed point in the ocean with reasonable accuracy, ought to be able to get you in from Laguardia, down to Fifth Avenue before you collect your old age pension. Well we are going to work on that aren't we Jim. Then there is another law that says elementary and secondary education. But what it means is that every child of every religion, every race and color, shall have an equal chance to learn and to grow and to aspire. And then there is another law that says economic opportunity amendments, but what it really means is; every human being from pre-school age, or the pre-school toddler, to a school drop-out, to an elderly, disabled man or woman, shall be helped to break out of the cycle of poverty and misery. That's what this war on poverty is all about. And I want to say one thing about, I know I keep ringing about the mistakes that we're making on the war on poverty; Oh my goodness! I say with all due respect to my beloved friends of the fourth estate, that the world of life is something more than just an agenda of mistakes. There are some mistakes made. We've trying to find the cure for cancer for 50 years. It's longer than

that, but I put 50 years of the Government's activities in it. We haven't found it. But you don't write and you don't have an article every other day saying well those doctors didn't find it last week. And they mis-appropriated funds; do you know how many hundreds of millions, billions of dollars that we've spent trying to find that answer. Do you know how many mice and rats that we used; and we haven't found it yet, but we're coming closer. We're getting somewhere nearer. But we don't condemn the medical profession or the science profession; I hope we never will, because they haven't found as yet, the answer. And we don't say tear down the laboratories, do away with the U.S. Department of Public Health Service, and the National Institutes of Health. Those National Institutes of Health haven't found a cure yet, but we build new ones. We add to them; we put in another 500 million dollars this year. And we said, look for the answer, keep at it. This is what we are trying to do with poverty. The people that we are working with today are the people that no one has been able to help up to now; the incurables. These are the terminal cases my dear friends. People that have skills, and people that have semi-skills, people that are reasonable physically well, and people that are reasonably even mentally balanced. They have a job. This nation is basically fully employed; but there are yet a number of people in our midst that have been with us since the beginning of this republic in a certain

proportion. And as the scriptures say, " the poor you shall always have with you". We've had poor, and we're trying now to get at the root causes. We're trying to find out what causes this malignancy. We're trying to find out is it a virus , so to speak, a kind of social virus. Is it contagious; we think we know some answers. We know that the poor beget the poor; the illiterate beget the illiterate. We know that there are families that have been on relief and welfare for five generations, four generations. We say now that the time is of hand, let's see if we can't break them out of this prison, this chain that had them, literally fastened to the wall of their own poverty and helplessness. My fellow Americans, we are going to make some mistakes; If you want to call them mistakes. We're experimenting. We're experimenting by putting out 16 grants of \$893,000 in Consumer Education. I'm not sure that it's going to work, but I know we ought to try; I know we have to try. I'm not all sure that everything we're trying to do in the job core centers, in the neighbor youth corp, in the community centers, is going to work. But I'll tell you one thing, I had an editorial read to me the other day. Oh, it was lulu. And it just condemn the job core. It said that do you know that over 30% of the young men that are in the job core camps drop out in the first six weeks. I wrote back the editor and said I wanted to congratulate you for that heartening message. Do you know why? Because of all the

members in the job core, there are 100% drop outs before they get in. They are drop-outs before they start. And wasn't it wonderful that a critic of the program found that only about 30% had dropped out after they got in. 70% remained; 70% getting a chance first, and for the first time in their life for self-respect. To regain their self-respect. To learn and to have the basic tools of communication; reading, writing and arithmetic to communicate. And thirdly, to have a marketable skill. These are the great news items of today, not the fact that somebody got into a fight. Why my dear friends may I say I've been reading about some of these little discreptencies they've had in the job core camps and you just think this is the most unusual thing in the world. They have quite a battle up here in Newport Road Island about a year ago, and every one of them were the sons and daughters from very well-to-do families, and everyone of them were the best young men and women from the best colleges and universities in the country, and they tore the place apart. I don't advocate it, I'm not saying this is the way it ought to be, but I want to say this that there isn't anything unusual about somebody getting out of hand. If that's the case then why do we have so many police? What is important, and the good news of today are the accomplishments that we are making; the achievements, the lives that are being saved, the human waste that's being reclaimed. And I'm here to tell you that if a

Government program can help bring back ten people to be participants in the life of this nation on a self respecting, honorable basis, it's a wise investment. Well, I could go down the line, I feel very strongly about these matters, I know we're making progress. I am an optomist about our country, it's a great place. Many laws we've had, the Crime Commission Act, to see if we can't find better law enforcement methods; to provide for safety in our streets and our parks. All of these things are important. If you call the roll in these acts and you'll find that in every instance men like Jim Scheuer, not only fought to enact them, but is fighting now to assure their fullest application in your daily lives. I call upon the people of our cities and of our country sides, that are advocates, that are affirmative, that are a positive minded people. I call upon you to speak up. You don't need to always just hear the bad news. It's good to know what's wrong with the program. Never should anyone ever want to stifle honest criticism or any kind of criticism. You never know, what you may think is a misguided point of view may actually turn out to be the truth. Therefore, you do need honest protest and criticism. That's the basic right of a free people and a free nation, in fact, it's the saving right of a free country. But by the same token, when something is beginning to happen that looks half-way good, that looks like it has some positive value to it, get interested, will you.

Try to find out more about it; talk about it. This is a representative government. Project Head Start for half a million young children ,what a blessing! Do you what this has meant to those children? That project needs your help now. You got to talk to your Congressman about it. I think we are going to have to have some priority in our government in the months ahead. We are not going to be able to do everything. We have to make up our minds what we are going to do, and I know that the only, one of the sure ways, one of the best ways to break a family out of the stifle of poverty which has imprisoned them, is to work with the children. Let them get out. Maybe some of the older ones won't be able to break away. But work with the youngsters. And you know if you follow that youngster, you get to the parents. If you work with that child he will lead you to the parents; he'll lead you to the school; he'll lead you wherever you need to go. And I want the country to get on fire with some of these projects. Not because they are government, because they are not government. Government is just part of it. You're the main base of it. Let's think about our youngsters, let's think what we can do; lets see how we can give young people of today the chance for skills; marketable skills that are needed; self-respect. You know that's really what it takes more than anything else. Some people have just been beaten down so long and you know of whom I speak. To put frankly, some people have

been told to get in the back of the bus for 200 years. It's our job now to let them know, to help them know that they can ride the front seat. And I want you to also remember that the highest honor you'll ever have in your life, is the honor which you already possess. Everyone of us are proud of our families, I hope; of our religion, of our ethnic group, our origin, our background, we ought to have a sense of pride about that. And we are rich in America because of this diversity this variety of cultures, and we want to consider that. This adds beauty to our great mosaic that we call America. But you know what the greatest honor in the world is? The greatest title; not president, vice-president, not king or emperor or chancellor; the greatest title in the world and the greatest honor in the world is to be a citizen of the United States of America. And when you do, when you recognize that you'll forget about color, or whether you're fat or thin, or good looking or not so good looking. You'll just be proud of the fact that you're part of the great social political, spiritual system, and a great part, a part of the great nation. I am, that's why I came here to talk to you. I'm proud of my citizenship. And may I say I'm very proud of the men that represent you here today. Jim I've overstayed my time, but I get to a fine group like this and I just want to share these thoughts with them. Thank you very much.



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