

member Board of Public Works
REMARKS

VICE PRESIDENT HUBERT HUMPHREY

WEST VIRGINIA AFL-CIO LEGISLATIVE CONFERENCE

CHARLESTON, W. VA.

FEBRUARY 8, 1967

*misses
Rev Newsome
m speaker -*

Legislature

Edna Amstrong

*- Miles Stanley
- Gov Smith
- Gov Barron*

Mayor Shanklin

I have visited your Mountain State many times.

But I think you can understand that my most vivid memories

are of the spring of 1960, when I campaigned up and down

West Virginia -- and, believe me, I do mean up and down *mostly down*

└ A lot has happened since then. A lot of progress
has been made by West Virginia and West Virginians. (And ✓

I have made some myself. *at this*

└ You have been blessed with first-rate leadership:

-- with Governor Smith, whose alert and modern-

minded administration has done so much to spark your economic
progress;

-- with Senator Byrd, whose new post as *Secretary of* ~~head of~~

the Senate Democratic Conference offers him fresh opportunities
for statesmanship;

-- with Senator Randolph, whose prominence as Chairman of the Senate Public Works Committee puts him in position to give even more distinguished service to West Virginia and to the nation.

Back in 1960, I remember, there were some Americans who thought that poverty was something peculiar to West Virginia. And I remember that people here strenuously objected to being singled out in this way.

and How right they were. For, since then, Americans have become painfully aware that there was poverty in every state and every city in this nation. For the most part, it was hidden away in isolated rural areas or urban ghettos, where it was all too easy to ignore it or not even see it.

To paraphrase the theme of your Governor's "State of the State Message", what has happened is this: Poverty has for the first time commanded the attention of the American people and spurred them into action.

Of course, Americans have been fighting their way out of poverty in one way or another ever since the first settlers came here to escape the poverty of the Old World.

And the labor movement in particular has been battling poverty directly, by organizing men and women to get decent wages and working conditions. — *Front line fighters against poverty*

The new war on poverty has been in progress for only two years. Yet there are already summer soldiers who are prepared to haul down the banners, fold the tents, and abandon the field of battle. *Oh, ye of little faith!*

Let us take stock. Just how far have we come?

First, let us put the war on poverty in perspective.

It is being waged on a much wider front than the programs -- such as the Job Corps and Head Start -- initiated by the Office of Economic Opportunity.

Broad front!

The sums allotted to the total attack upon poverty in the President's new budget add up to over 25 billion dollars -- an increase of 3 billion dollars over last year. Of the 25 billion dollar total, the Office of Economic Opportunity accounts for only 2 billion dollars.

↳ The war on poverty includes the great social programs launched by Franklin Delano Roosevelt, such as Social Security, the National Labor Relations Act, and the minimum wage.

↳ It includes, too, the full-employment economic policy of the Kennedy and Johnson Administrations -- a policy which has created an environment in which business, labor, and agriculture could work together to achieve a sustained economic growth -- now in its seventy-first month -- unprecedented in our history.

↳ The war on poverty includes Medicare, the Appalachian Regional Development program, the Economic Development Administration, and the new federal programs for elementary and secondary schools, *— all of which*

~~which~~ are specifically directed to helping under-privileged children get a better education and a better start in life.

What have these programs and policies achieved?

+ Five million more Americans are at work today than were at work a year ago.

+ Wages are the highest in our history and unemployment is at its lowest point in 13 years.

+ Our Gross National Product has reached three-quarters of a trillion dollars.

+ More than one million persons are receiving job training under federal programs, compared to none only six years ago.

+ Of the six million young Americans in college today, one million are there because of federal assistance.

+ More than 3.5 million elderly Americans have already received assistance under Medicare.

↳ The war on poverty has created eleven hundred
Community Action agencies, serving half the nation's poor
and touching all the 50 most poverty-afflicted metropolitan areas.

+ It has enlisted more than 56 thousand citizens
for community action boards, more than one-third of them
from the poor.

+ It has helped prepare 1.2 million pre-schoolers
for the first grade through the Head Start program.

+ It has given work and training to 5 hundred thousand
young people through the Neighborhood Youth Corps.

+ It has helped 25 thousand high school youngsters
through the slum-to-college Upward Bound program.

+ It has graduated 13 thousand young people from
residential Job Corps centers, with 29 thousand more now in
training in 113 centers.

+ It has utilized five thousand senior citizens as
"foster grandparents" to ten thousand children in public and
private institutions.

There are seven million fewer people living in poverty than there were six years ago.

Then, the poor amounted to almost 21 per cent of their people -- today they are less than 16 per cent. — *Quite A Record!*

But the very progress that we have been making has brought us closer to the hard core of poverty. And it has forced us to face the fact that there are no panaceas ... no quick and easy solutions — *no instant cures.*

Poverty is mankind's oldest and cruelest burden, ~~antodating recorded history~~, And it will not vanish overnight, even in America. *here the good news.*

But Millions of Americans have begun the journey toward becoming self-sustaining, tax-paying citizens. *But for many the road will be long and difficult.*

The important thing is that they are eager to work their way out of poverty.

↳ We have found that people do not prefer idleness on relief to honest work. ↳ Every opportunity program that has been offered has more people lining up at the door than there are places inside.

↳ Therefore, it would be worse than cruel -- it would be tragic -- to slam the door in their faces. For, as the Bible says:

↳ "Hope deferred maketh the heart sick."

↳ We have learned, too, that many of the hard-core unemployed require a great deal of direct individual training -- in matters so elementary as literacy and personal grooming -- to become employable. ↳ Many must learn how to get a bus, what kind of clothes to wear, how to apply for a job, how to punch a time clock.

↳ It is not enough merely to open the doors of opportunity -- we must help people, through training, to step through them with confidence.

the
hard
task
chic
Phil

open gates
&
help
through!

But we have also learned that there is a great potential for leadership among the poor. We have learned that, while we need public officials and professional social workers in Community Action programs, we also need the contribution that only the poor themselves can make.

Poor helping themselves

They want to help make decisions that will affect their lives

They do not want things done to and for them. They want to help themselves. And that is as it should be!

Today there are thousands of poor people -- never before consulted, never heeded, never given a voice -- serving on local anti-poverty boards throughout the country. Just as the labor movement developed its own leaders -- its William Greens and its Philip Murrays -- so also are the poor.

But ↗ Perhaps the most exciting discovery we have made is the eagerness of Americans who are not poor to volunteer for service in the war on poverty. Something like one hundred thousand volunteers have already taken part in the Head Start program alone.

100,000

And, in addition to the three thousand full-time VISTA volunteers, we are ^{on the way} ~~planning~~ ^{ing} to recruit fifty thousand additional VISTA "associates" -- people who will give part-time service in their own communities.

This is pioneering work, this war on poverty.
There are no blazed trails. ^{no marked maps - no secret formulas -}
We are learning by experience
as we go along. — Learning by Doing!

We have learned, for example, that the effects of the Head Start program -- impressive as they seem at first -- tend to fade away in the first few months of regular school.
So, in order to maintain the momentum gained in Head Start, we are initiating a Head Start Follow Through Program in the primary grades.

And I predict that the Head Start youngsters of today will grow up to be self-supporting heads of families of their own.

See the President's Youth Message of Today

⌞ We have had to learn by experience how to run effective Job Corps camps. Of course, there have been drop-outs. But the Job Corps dropout rate has been less than that in our colleges.

⌞ The average Job Corps graduate today enters industry at a starting rate of one dollar 71 cents an hour -- whereas those who had worked at all before entering the Corps averaged 70 cents an hour.

⌞ We've become keenly aware of the multiple and inter-acting causes of poverty. We've learned that even education, vital as it is, is not enough in itself. There must be improvement in the child's home and community background ... there must be adequate nutrition and health care.

⌞ We have been aroused to our really disgraceful failure to make health services available to the poor. To cite one example: There ^{was not} ~~is not~~ a single hospital in the Watts area of Los Angeles. ^{But} With the aid of poverty funds, a neighborhood

a neighborhood health center is under construction there --
and more are underway in the slum areas of other cities.

Rural
Areas

↳ We recognize the need to do more for the rural
areas, where more than two-fifths of the nation's poor live --
and the President has proposed to channel more help to these
areas.

↳ For millions^{of our people} in poverty, of course, there is only
one practical remedy -- more money.

↳ These are the aged, the disabled, the families with
young children and no bread-winner -- people who literally
are unable to support themselves.

↳ To meet this need, the President is urging a very
substantial across-the-board boost of Social Security benefits,
and the extension of Medicare to the 1.3 million permanently
and totally disabled Americans under 65.

He is also urging a good, hard look at our public
assistance system, which in many respects seems stuck in a
deep and dreary rut.

↳ In some states, benefits are disgracefully low. In some states, the denial of relief to a family with a man in the house actually operates to break families up and increase dependency. ↳ Also, the practice of deducting a dollar from relief for each dollar earned is a disincentive rather than an incentive to work.

↳ Looking further ahead, the President is appointing a commission of leading citizens to look into all possible means for assuring every American a way out of poverty.

We Keep Trying!

↳ Our ultimate objective must be to create opportunity for everyone who is capable of working. ↳ Further, I believe, our rich nation must also assure to those unable to work, or unable to find jobs, an income sufficient to provide them with the essentials of life and of human dignity.

↳ Yes, we are learning from experience.! We are improving old ways of overcoming poverty, and developing new ones.

But I can assure you of one thing. We are not going to turn our backs on the poor. *We will not Retreat!*

" Just as we are determined to be the first nation to put men on the moon, so we are determined to be the first *nation to* put its people -- all its people -- on their feet here on earth.

And all elements of our national community -- state and local government, business, labor, and our great voluntary organizations -- have an important part to play. *and must be prepared*

First of all, state and local governments need to put themselves in better shape in terms of both organization and personnel, to cope with the problems that face their people -- and notably the problem of poverty.

Governor Smith has noted that your constitution need modernizing. So do those of many other states. So do many city charters.

The more effectively state and local governments can move to meet the needs of their own people --

along lines such as those set forth in your Governor's
recommendations -- the less reason there will be for the
federal government to step in.

↳ The federal government does not -- and should
not -- seek to supplant local initiative, What is needed is an
effective working partnership between all levels of government.

Here, I know, I am preaching to the converted --
because the performance of West Virginians in this field has
been outstanding.

↳ If anyone wants to see a demonstration of the best
kind of working partnership between federal and state government,
let him come to West Virginia.○

↳ We in Washington have been happy to give you
timely help, but you have more than matched it with your own
hard work and your own hard-earned money.○

*Your Senators
+ Congressmen.*

L Instead of merely complaining about red tape, you have slashed it by establishing a special state discretionary fund for matching federal grants -- an innovation which, I am sure, will be widely copied elsewhere. (Should be)

L You have played a key role, too, in the pioneering work of the Appalachian Regional Commission, ~~this great cooperative effort of the states that share Appalachia's problems to work their way out of them.~~ I understand that you have

already received authority to spend some 21 million dollars in Appalachian Act funds -- and that it will result in 48 million dollars worth of new roads, schools, hospitals, and other facilities vital to your future.

This is good business
Pollution
You are working to clean your water and air and to reform strip-mining abuses.

And I want to pay special tribute here to the leadership of your state AFL-CIO president, Miles Stanley.

L He has put labor in the front line of the war on poverty, not only here but throughout the Appalachian region. You are setting the pace here for all of organized labor.

Let me repeat: This poverty war is not something for government alone. We need everyone.

Labor has been in the war from the start.

I am pleased that private enterprise has met its opportunity to ^{operate} / Job Corps camps -- and to make money doing it.

I am pleased that we have been able to revise our public housing procedures so as to enable the private home-building industry to enter this field more fully -- and to make money for itself, while saving taxpayers' money on overall costs.

I am pleased that we are giving private enterprise more scope -- and profitable scope -- to design better schools and more economical hospitals.

For we cannot realistically expect private enterprise to involve itself in public need without profit incentive.

Profit and morality are a hard combination to beat.

└ I would like to see our universities enlist more fully in the war on poverty. They should be centers of action as well as study -- not pacifist observers of the struggle, but militant participants in it.

Better America.

└ The war on poverty is, ~~in essence~~, a call to action to all Americans to join in building a better America ... an America with better education for all ... an America free of slums ... an America that cares for its elderly and offers opportunity to its young.

and └ Every American has a stake in winning this war.

└ For the poverty of those who have least casts a dark shadow on the well-being of those who have enough.

└ When you volunteer in this war, you volunteer to mobilize our resources to improve our social security ... to expand our health care ... to train our jobless ... to educate our children ... to rehabilitate not only slums but the people who live in them.

↳ You volunteer to build ⁹~~the~~ strong and free and
happy America, ~~that we have always sought~~ ~~the America~~
we will one day have.

* * *

*Here's our problem of
tomorrow -
(Pres. message)*

↳ President Johnson has said this is a "time of testing."
↳ It is a time of testing in the war on poverty.
↳ It is a time of testing in Washington, but not
only in Washington.

↳ It is a time of testing here in West Virginia, as you
seek to consolidate and step up your own progress out of poverty.

↳ It is a time of testing in statehouses, in city halls,
in farmers' organizations, in corporate boardrooms and in
union headquarters throughout this nation.

and ↳ It is a time of testing in the Congress of the
United States.

There are members of the 90th Congress who have
called for a halt in the war on poverty ... who call for cuts ...

who oppose the programs of the President and of his Congressional leadership.

I ask them:

Which child would you deny education?

Which grandmother or grandfather would you deny medical care?

Which community would you leave on poverty's ragged edge?

Which city streets would you leave as breeding places for violence and crime?

Which citizens would you leave behind the rest of us as stragglers and as second-class people?

I say that to be hard-headed, you do not have to be hard-hearted.

I say that to save money, we cannot afford to waste people.

↳ The strength of America lies with its people -- not people on the dole, but people on the job ... not people in despair, but people filled with hope ... not people without education, but people with skill and knowledge ... not people turned away, but people welcomed by their neighbors as full and equal partners in our American adventure.

↳ We are going to stand and fight for those people!
I know that the members of the West Virginia Congressional delegation are with us. And I know that you are with us.

↳ Where there have been mistakes, we will correct them. Where something doesn't work, we will find something that does.

↳ But we have come too far to turn away from those who need our help to help themselves. And together we shall go forward to win the war on poverty -- the only war we seek, here or anywhere in the world.

Even during these years of unparalleled prosperity:

- 5.5 million children under six, and 9 million more under 17, live in families too poor to feed and house them adequately.
- This year one million babies, one in every four, will be born to mothers who receive little or no obstetric care.
- More than four million children will suffer physical handicaps and another two million will fall victim to preventable accidents or disease.
- One million young Americans, most of them from poor families, will drop out of school this year -- many to join the unhappy legion of the unemployed.
- One in every six young men under 18 will be taken to juvenile court for at least one offense this year.

Our nation can help to cure these social ills if once again, as in the past, we pledge our continuing stewardship of our greatest wealth -- our young people.

more

I recommend a 12-point program for the children and youth of America. With the help of the Congress, we can:

1. Preserve the hope and opportunity of Head Start by a "Follow-Through" program in the early grades.
2. Strengthen Head Start by extending its reach to younger children.
3. Begin a pilot lunch program to reach preschool children who now lack proper nourishment.
4. Create child and parent centers in areas of acute poverty to provide modern and comprehensive family and child development services.
5. Help the States train specialists -- now in critically short supply -- to deal with problems of children and youth.
6. Strengthen and modernize programs providing aid for children in poor families.
7. Increase Social Security payments for 3 million children, whose support has been cut off by the death, disability or retirement of their parents.
8. Expand our programs for early diagnosis and treatment of children with handicaps.
9. Carry forward our attack on mental retardation, which afflicts more than 125,000 children each year.
10. Launch a new pilot program of dental care for children.
11. Help States and communities across the nation plan and operate programs to prevent juvenile delinquents from becoming adult delinquents.
12. Enrich the summer months for needy boys and girls.



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