

[Actually Feb. 22, 1967 -
Transcript]

REMARKS OF

HONORABLE HUBERT H. HUMPHREY,

VICE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES

- - -

*Democrat Breakfast
Phoenix, Arizona
February 21, 1967*

WARD & PAUL

OFFICIAL REPORTERS

917 G STREET, N.W.

WASHINGTON, D. C. 20001

AREA CODE 202-628-4266

TIMB

Phone: (Area 202) 628-4266

1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25

REMARKS OF
HONORABLE HUBERT H. HUMPHREY,
VICE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES

- - -

Democratic Breakfast

Phoenix, Arizona

February 21, 1967

WARD & PAUL

917 G St., N. W., Washington 1, D. C.

1 VICE PRESIDENT HUMPHREY: Well, now, I am going to
2 talk to you this morning about our party, our country, our
3 President, our administration.

4 I am not here to speak in derogation of the opposi-
5 tion. I am here to speak in approval and hopefully in advocacy
6 of what you are and what we stand for and what has been done.

7 We know we need a two-party structure in our country
8 But I want to remind you, my fellow Democrats, that doesn't
9 mean because you endorse that principle that you have to let
10 them win.

11 (Laughter.)

12 It does happen but it is not necessary.

13 Somebody said out at the airport the other day that
14 the time that it seems to rain the hardest in Arizona in on
15 election day.

16 (Laughter.)

17 And I said yes, but for goodness sake let's not have
18 a flood of opposition votes on that particular day.

19 My message to you this morning is in terms of the
20 party is this: First of all, we need the political parties.
21 Don't downgrade partisan politics. You cannot operate through
22 the government without the competition of political parties.
23 A political party is an instrument for the development of
24 public policy. It is an educational instrument. It is an
25 action instrument. It is vitally needed, a good, vibrant,

1 vigorous political party, is needed in order to shape public
2 opinion, in order to arouse public interest in public affairs,
3 in order to present good thoughtful, experienced, honorable
4 candidates.

5 And a political party, in order to be successful,
6 must be like a family, it must stick together. You must be-
7 come a tolerant -- you must always in respect of the other
8 man's point of view. We do not need to have unanimity, the
9 kind that is forced oneness. But we definitely need unity,
10 unity borne out of respect for the other man's point of view,
11 and unity that comes because we have common objectives, and
12 unity that comes because we know that if we are given the
13 chance or the opportunity to serve, that despite any of our
14 personal differences, despite any of the regional differences,
15 that we can serve well and we hope to serve better than those
16 who compete with us.

17 So I come to you today as your long-time friend,
18 saying to you exactly what I said to my fellow Democrats back
19 in Minneapolis this last Sunday. I stopped in Minneapolis
20 for a State Central Committee meeting. And we went through
21 the same sort of turmoil in 1966 in the election period in
22 Minnesota as you did here in Arizona. And I sometimes think
23 what happens to us in these periods is good for us because
24 it causes us to do some rethinking, take another look at our-
25 selves, find out what is wrong.

Phone: (Area 202) 628-4266

1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25

And I want to repeat to you what I said to them. It is as old as Ben Franklin who said we either hang together or we hang separately. And don't forget it. You can enjoy the luxury or division and factions and you will also enjoy the tragedy and the despair of defeat. Or you can enjoy the opportunity of unity and you can have the joy of victory. Just make up your mind what you want.

(Applause.)

We must put aside new things and we must think of what is our mission. Now the State of Arizona needs the Democratic Party. It needs you. And the nation needs you and the national party needs you. So I am not going to give you a review of ancient history. I am not going to go back and bemoan what happened a month or so -- a few months ago. I am not even going to analyze what I think happened or how it happened. I know what happened, I don't have to analyze that. But it wasn't as bad as some make out and it surely isn't as good as we would have liked it. But we can't relive November 8, 1966 -- it is gone and anyone that is going to serve anybody or any purpose must look to the future. And I will give you the date, the date that we have of destiny is in November 1968. And we need to prepare ourselves for that date and we need to prepare not only ourselves but we need to prepare the public mind for that date. We need to look ahead, because that election in 1968 will be won or lost several weeks and

WARD & PAUL

917 G St., N. W., Washington 1, D. C.

1 even months before the election date ever arrives.

2 It is what we do between now and then that really
3 counts. It is how we organize, it is what you are able to do
4 to do your part. It is what you are able to do in carrying
5 the message of the administration and of the Democratic Party
6 to the people between now and then that is going to determine
7 what is going to happen in 1968. And let me tell you that the
8 opposition party is stronger. We know that. It learned many
9 lessons. And it is going to be a tough and a vigorous com-
10 petitor. And that ought to make us all better. We ought never
11 to permit ourselves to get soft.

12 I think the question we need to ask right now is are
13 we doing what is right. Are we doing as a people, as a party,
14 as a government, and as a nation what is right. Because I am
15 one of these persons that happens to believe that if you spend
16 your time and effort thinking about substance and principle,
17 you will not have quite so much concern about image and popu-
18 larity.

19 Popularity is a ~~fleeting fancy~~ **Principle** in
20 politics is an absolute essential if you are going to have a
21 good party.

22 (Applause.)

23 And I know that image is important. What people
24 think you are is important. But what is really more import-
25 ant, my fellow Americans, is what you are and who you are and

1 what you stand for.

2 (Applause.)

3 And if you are what you want to be, if you stand for
4 what you believe is right, if you have sincerity and convic-
5 tion, if you have a solid belief in principles of this party,
6 a humanitarian concern for leading, of believe and faith in
7 our freedom, of a believe that there ought to be but one
8 citizenship in this country, and that is the belief that to
9 have the title is the most honored title in the world, greater
10 than is called emporer or prince, king or queen, if you are
11 but a citizen of the United States of America, and a first-
12 class citizen.

13 (Applause.)

14 If you are but that citizen and then indeed you
15 occupy a place of honor.

16 So I ask you to take a look at where we are and
17 where we are going. And I have jotted down here just a few
18 thoughts. I must say, first of all, as I listened to our
19 national committeewoman lead us in the pledge of allegiance,
20 I had that same feeling that a school boy has, goose pimples,
21 so to speak. I have never quitengotten over that feeling of
22 of old-fashioned patriotism when I see that flag and when I
23 think of our country. And I am not ashamed of it. As a
24 matter of fact, I am as proud of it as I am to be proud of my
25 religion, to be proud of my parents, of my family. And when

1 I think of what that pledge says, it tells us exactly what is
2 in my heart this morning. And it tells us exactly what we
3 are trying to do, what the hope is of this government and
4 what the promise is of this nation.

5 Remember back in those preliminary words of Peggy
6 leading the pledge -- the Republic for which it stands --
7 then comes the lesson -- one nation under God, indivisible,
8 and with liberty and justice for all.

9 My fellow Americans, we cannot have a divided nation
10 on race, religion, region or whatever it may be. This is one
11 nation. We accepted that a long time ago. And we --

12 (Applause.)

13 I think we learned in our affluence, in our prosperity
14 and even in our agony of conflict on occasion that with all of
15 man's genius and all of his powers, science and technology,
16 with everything, that he is very inadequate and that it is
17 one nation under one God. It is proper and fitting that the
18 people so blessed as we remember. And then we need to re-
19 member that it is indivisible because division in our weakens
20 us.

21 As I said last night, I think the great threat to
22 an early peace in Vietnam is the feeling in Hanoi and of the
23 Viet Cong that there is division in America. All we American
24 people don't --

25 (Applause.)

1 We Americans, even as we may disagree in some item
2 of policy or some tactic, if we Americans would just let the
3 world know that we have taken our stand, that we will not re-
4 treat, that we have no arrogance, we are not belligerent, we
5 are not bellicose, we are not braggadocio, but that we are
6 resolute, we are strong, we are principled and we are patient.

7 If the world knew that we mean business, yours boys
8 will be home all the quicker.

9 (Applause.)

10 And then those beautiful words -- with liberty and
11 justice for all. And I will concede people here, people of
12 every race, creed and nationality, they mean justice, not
13 just for Stewart Udall or Hubert Humphrey, not just for some
14 people from some parts of the world, but this America of ours
15 is the most alien, it is of many people. And its beauty and
16 its strength and the fact that it is a nation of many strains,
17 of many peoples, of many ethnic groups, of many nationalities,
18 but of one common purpose.

19 And with liberty and justice for all is not just
20 something for children to learn, to recite in school. It is
21 something for their parents to live and for children to live.
22 It is a commitment. It is a promise. And it is a challenge.
23 So let's not forget it. The only way that I know that this
24 America of ours can be yours, can take the terrible load that
25 we carry, can be the world leader that we and must continue

1 to be, is if we are able to provide a way for everybody,
 2 every citizen to be a full participant in the life of this
 3 nation, a full participant with equal opportunity to be a
 4 first-class citizen, and a full participation in the life of
 5 this democracy. No other country is like it.

6 (Applause.)

7 Now, this is what we seek to do. The word of the
 8 Johnson-Humphrey administration is a word that you need to
 9 remember, is the word "opportunity."

10 (Applause.)

11 We do not seek to build a welfare state in which
 12 people lose self-reliance and self-respect. We do not seek to
 13 build a welfare state in which the symbol of the compassion
 14 of the government is merely a government check. What we need
 15 to build is a state of opportunity so that everyone can be a
 16 self-sustaining, self-respecting, dignified citizen. That is
 17 our goal.

18 (Applause.)

19 And we think it can be done. It has never been done
 20 before but we think it can be. Of course there will be those
 21 who, through no fault of their own, will need our help and
 22 our continued help. To be charitable and be kind is not a
 23 sign of weakness. It is a sign of greatness. To be a man
 24 or a woman of compassion does not show that you run away from
 25 hard duty. It shows that you have a kind heart. And charity

Phone: (Area 202) 628-4266

WARD & PAUL

917 G St., N. W., Washington 1, D. C.

1 is a great attribution, virtue, and so is compassion.

2 But what is most important of all is to remember
3 that every human being has within him that spark of greatness
4 which is that divine spark. And we know it to be true that
5 God did create man in his own image and because of that there
6 is something unique about human kindness. And that unique-
7 ness means more than just kindness and compassion, to bring
8 it to light. What it needs is self-respect. What it needs
9 is self-help. What it needs is a chance and what it needs
10 is, as I said, opportunity.

11 So we have added not a new word. We have put new
12 emphasis -- not only life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness
13 but life, liberty and opportunity which adds up to the
14 pursuit of happiness.

15 And how are we doing it? Well, I am not going to
16 run down the catalog here of legislative achievements, even
17 though, as Stewart Udall said to me this morning before we
18 talked over here, he said you know I sometimes think we have
19 accomplished so much in these last few years that people
20 can't quite absorb it and don't quite believe it. That 89th
21 Congress that just completed its work not only redressed
22 grievances of yesterday in many of its legislative proposals
23 but more significantly it pointed to the future.

24 I could give you a dozen pieces of legislation that
25 are directed not merely to the problems of today but to the

1 years ahead, where we filled up the warehouse, the store house
2 of our democracy with the tools that we will need for genera-
3 tions yet unborn. Because this country of ours is moving
4 ahead in rapid change. Technology and science is moving
5 ahead. But the most important thing of all is what is happen-
6 ing in human relations.

7 You know, St. Augustine, the great leader in
8 religion in his day, his philosophy, he once commented that
9 the most wondrous thing of all is man himself. And when we
10 think of the wonders of space and the wonders of science, I
11 want you to remember that the most wondrous thing of all is
12 man himself. And while we have done tremendous things in
13 science and technology, what we have done that is even more
14 important is that we have broken through the barriers of
15 prejudice. We are beating down these walls that separate
16 people. We are beginning to once at long last reach out with
17 brothers and sisters to be a family of man, a family of this
18 great nation of ours.

19 We are beginning, at long last, to bring people into
20 participation in the government and community affairs that
21 for years were denied, never given a chance. Oh, I think
22 something wonderful has happened. And what is really wonder-
23 ful is that at the time of our greatest wealth and power we
24 have learned to walk humbly with our God and we have also
25 learned and recognized that with all of our wealth, that there

1 are pockets of poverty in our midst, that with all of our
2 power there are people who are weak and helpless. And this
3 is the sign of strength. You don't become weak because you
4 acknowledge your limitations. You do not show weakness because
5 you admit your inadequacies.

6 It is only the strong person and the strong nation
7 that can ever admit inadequacies or weakness. And then once
8 admitted, then to do something about this. And that is what
9 we are doing, doing something about this.

10 And I want to say to my fellow Democrats, I know
11 that you want more done. I read it every day. I know that
12 there are members of Congress that want more done and that is
13 their right. As a matter of fact, we ought to be a very rest-
14 less people. We ought to always have new standards of achieve-
15 ment, higher goals that we reach out to. We ought to walk on
16 our tiptoes, reaching up to the sky and out to our friends
17 and neighbors.

18 But, having said that, let's not fall on our face
19 and let's not give up.

20 (Applause.)

21 I didn't think that I had said anything so impressive.

22 (Laughter.)

23 We have a thing worked out in the Humphrey family,
24 if things bog down a little bit I have "mom" walk in.

25 (Laughter.)

1 (Laughter.)

2 But, Muriel, I was just telling them what you have
3 heard me say many times, that we are a restless people. And
4 we want to have greater accomplishments. But in that wanting,
5 just as in your family or your business, don't destroy what
6 you have accomplished and don't downgrade what you have done.

7 Remember, my dear friends, it is sort of like the
8 family of yesterday that once would eat out of the same bowl.
9 You remember the family soup tourine where everybody sort of
10 dipped in and ladle out your own soup for their own dish. I
11 remind you that this great program that is ours belongs to
12 you, it belongs to me, it belongs to the President and be-
13 longs to the Democratic Party, it belongs to the nation.

14 Now, if this is your party, this is your President,
15 this is your administration, if you keep putting a little
16 poison in the soup -- remember, you are going to have to eat
17 it and it isn't going to taste good.

18 (Applause.)

19 I know there are people that know how to do it better
20 than the President. The only one that dares not to admit it
21 is the Vice President.

22 (Laughter, applause.)

23 And I know we have many new Secretaries of State,
24 they are along most any place, the Secretaries of Defense and
25 the Secretaries of Interior -- we all know how to do it better

1 but, my dear friends, we only have one government at a time.
2 And what you need to take a look at is whether or not you
3 think that this administration and this President and this
4 party and this government, which is your administration, and
5 your party and your President and your government can do a
6 better job than the opposition. And if you think so, put
7 your government in.

8 (Applause.)

9 And I think I can give a catalog of groups, a
10 listing, and say that we at least would merit your favorable
11 consideration. When I think of what we have done in the field
12 of civil rights -- and yet I know there is much more to do.
13 I am not satisfied any more than others are. But I know that
14 we are on the march. I know that we have taken the first
15 steps. I know we are in forward motion. When I th

16 When I think of what we have done in conservation
17 under the leadership of your own man here, your own Stewart
18 Udall, I know we have done more in these last six years than
19 anybody ever dreamed was possible.

20 When I think of what we have done in education --

21 (Applause.)

22 When I think of what we have done in education --
23 why, when I first came to the Congress of the United States,
24 the first bill I voted on in 1949 was federal aid to educa-
25 tion. And I want to say it was defeated on the basis of

1 religion or race -- one year the Senate would pass it and
2 the next year the House would defeat it. The next year the
3 House would pass it and then the Senate would defeat it.
4 And you had to wait for a man by the name of Lyndon Baines
5 Johnson to become President of the United States --

6 (Applause.)

7 -- a man who followed in the footsteps of one pioneer.
8 I want credit to go where credit is due, but that team then of
9 Kennedy and Johnson pioneered these programs.

10 (Applause.)

11 And I will never forget what President Johnson said
12 when he became our President after that tragic hour in Dallas,
13 when he said, "Let us continue." And we have and we have gone
14 on and today there are vast programs of educational opporun-
15 ity for the disadvantages that never were known before.

16 Of course, we haven't done all we would like to do.
17 But, my dear friends, we are doing three hundred per cent more
18 right now in federal aid to education than we did two years
19 ago and we are doing I don't know how many times more than we
20 did six years ago. There was little or none six years ago.
21 We are moving and we are moving in a host of things.

22 Let me just show you what has happened. We are in
23 the 71st month, the 71st month of uninterrupted economic
24 progress in this country.

25 (Applause.)

1 Most people are beginning to take that for granted.
2 I know that some of us haven't taken that for granted. I see
3 a few gray hairs around here. I see quite a few people of my
4 age group. We didn't take uninterrupted economic progress
5 for granted. I went through the depression and so did you
6 and I lived through three economic recessions, from 1953 to
7 1961. I saw, I felt it. But since 1961, when a young man
8 said, "Let's get this country moving again," to this very
9 hour, we have 71 months of continuous prosperity, economic
10 growth and economic prosperity.

11 (Applause.)

12 Many of our critics say, "Oh, yes, but look what
13 has happened to prices, they have gone up." Let them in any
14 other nation on the face of the earth and everything is
15 relative. But the average income of a worker, as John Evans
16 here from the AFL-CIO, can tell you, has increased throughout
17 this nation despite price increases, in true value and true
18 worth in the last five years by 25 per cent.

19 Now, that is not bad. There are nine million more
20 people at work in the labor force today than in 1962. And
21 seven million of them have come into that blessed opportunity
22 of jobs since 1963. Not bad.

23 \$750 million gross national product -- approaches
24 three-quarters of a trillion -- a figure that is almost beyond
25 our comprehension.

1 There are five million more people at work today
2 than a year and a quarter ago. And this has happened under
3 your President, under your administration, through the good
4 auspices of your party, the leaders of this country, and your
5 country. That is your President.

6 (Applause.)

7 And, you see, something else has happened to our
8 thinking. We don't want to go around saying that the govern-
9 ment does all these things because the government doesn't do
10 all of these things. Your Democratic Party, your President,
11 your administration believes in the partnership between
12 government and private enterprise, the government and the
13 whole community; between the federal government, state govern-
14 ment, and local government; between the government of the
15 United States and the businessman and the labor leader. We
16 believe in partnership rather than in name-calling. We haven't
17 called the businessman a mean and nasty thing since we have
18 been power and we haven't accused a labor leader of a mean
19 and nasty trick, either, since we have been in power. We
20 have talked positively and constructively about the American
21 people.

22 (Applause.)

23 Six years ago, my fellow Americans, not a single
24 young man was in job training in this country and there were
25 unemployed, lots of them. There was the hard core unemployed,

1 there was the Negro tennager unemployed, there was the Mexican-
2 American unemployed, there was a young boy or girl unemployed.
3 Six years ago not only single training program -- today, as
4 I speak to you this morning, one million boys and girls of
5 employment age are in job training programs in the United
6 States.

7 (Applause.)

8 And this has been done by your President, your govern-
9 ment, your administration under the leadership of your party.
10 Just keep it in mind. Six million boys and girls are in
11 higher education today, colleges and universities, the greatest
12 number in our history. And those colleges and universities
13 are receiving vast grants of federal aid from your government,
14 made possible by your President, your Congress, your adminis-
15 tration and your country.

16 Of those six million, one million of them are boys
17 and girls from poor families, who are getting a helping hand
18 from your administration.

19 (Applause.)

20 There are three and one-half million of our senior
21 citizens and I believe I see some here this morning -- three
22 and one-half million of them who, since July of this last
23 summer, are participants in and beneficiaries of a program
24 known as medicare.

25 (Applause.)

1 You know, I introduced the very first bill on medi-
2 care in May of 1949. It was a bill that was entitled "to pro-
3 vide hospital and nursing home care in terms of Social Security
4 for persons age 65 and over." And you ought to have heard
5 what people said about me. This is a mixed audience; I dare
6 not tell you.

7 (Applause.)

8 But we were pioneers and we dared to look ahead.
9 And it took -- first of all, it was President Truman's Health
10 Commission report that gave us that suggestion. And it took
11 from Truman's commission in 1948 to the first Humphrey bill
12 in 1949 to 1965 to get medicare enacted and he signed that
13 bill, the President of the United States went out to Independence,
14 Missouri to sign that bill in the presence of one of the great-
15 est men that ever graced the office of President of the
16 United States, Harry S. Truman.

17 (Applause.)

18 The results of medicare -- it is just getting started
19 -- first of all, the fact that it works is wonderful, because
20 it is such a massive, big problem and program. But it does
21 work. Our hospitals are better today. They are desegregated,
22 too. And they are being put to work at full capacity. Of
23 the three and a half million, two and a half million were
24 hospital patients and the hospitals of the United States in
25 six months, we see \$1 billion in payments for care of those

1 two and a half million patients.

2 (Applause.)

3 It is good for the hospitals, good for the patients,
4 good for the nurses and good for the country.

5 And there were only one million of our elderly that
6 have received medical attention from the doctor of their
7 choice, protecting the viability of the personal relationship
8 between doctor and patient. And those over one million senior
9 citizens have received, that doctors care, are better for it,
10 and the doctors have received \$100 million in payments for
11 their services. Not bad -- for hospitals, doctors, and
12 people -- a pretty good program.

13 (Applause.)

14 And it was gotten under the administration -- of
15 your administration and your President and your party and
16 your government. So look upon it with a degree of approval
17 and pride.

18 Now, there has been much said about the war on
19 poverty. And I would be the last one to tell you that it has
20 not made mistakes, because it is a new venture. We are seek-
21 ing cures for old diseases -- cancer, stroke, heart disease.
22 And we experiment, experiment, experiment and we don't find
23 all the answers. But we don't run the doctors out. We
24 don't close up the clinics. We don't say we aren't going to
25 do it again.

1 Instead of that, we say doctors, explore, research,
2 try again, try something else. And this year your federal
3 government will be investing over \$3 billion in medical re-
4 search in medical-technical assistance to find answers to
5 disease that afflicts the body. Because, as that old Arabic
6 proverb says, where there is health there is hope, and where
7 there is hope there is everything.

8 So we seek hope and we seek health. But we also
9 need to remember that there is an old disease and a disease
10 itself known as poverty. It has been the curse of mankind.
11 And because we haven't been able to do anything about it up
12 until now doesn't mean that we can't do it now because this
13 is a new day and age. And we are experimenting with time.
14 And sometimes we fail and falter. Sometimes we make gross
15 mistakes. But we are going to keep at it until we find some
16 answers.

17 We are not trying to make poverty more tolerable.
18 We are trying to find a cure and we are going to experiment.
19 And the experimentation is proving fairly good. There are
20 seven million fewer people living in poverty today than lived
21 in poverty six years ago. Then the poor amounted to almost
22 twenty-one per cent of our people. Today there are less
23 than sixteen per cent.

24 We are at least making some progress. The war on
25 poverty has created 1,100 community action agencies, serving

1 half of the nation, touching all of the fifty most poverty-
2 afflicted metropolitan areas.

3 But let me tell you what else has been done. It
4 has enlisted in civil participation over 56,000 citizens for
5 community action wards and more than one-third of them are
6 from the poor themselves -- 56,000, many of whom had never
7 been a participant in decision-making processes before. We
8 have extended the base of democracy and we are giving people
9 a chance now for some self-help, to help themselves, to find
10 some answers their way, for their community, for their people,
11 rather than having to come from our pocket, our Washington,
12 down to those people. These are our people.

13 (Applause.)

14 And I think you would be interested in knowing that
15 as a result of this program, over 1.2 million ~~are the little~~
16 ones, the children, the pre-school age children have had the
17 blessings and the help of Project Head Start, which was made
18 the finest educational program that this country ever con-
19 ceived because it reached the children.

20 (Applause.)

21 And now your President says we are going to have
22 project mode two, not just Head Start, where you will get
23 this little one that comes out of the slums of either the city
24 or rural poverty, a chance for the first time in his or her
25 life for a decent opportunity and then to cast him back to

1 the same old environment. For the project to follow through
2 is to give this same kind of stimulating, this modern, this
3 upgraded education as a continuing experience for this child,
4 until that person reaches adulthood and maturity.

5 We can do it. Let me tell you, my good friends,
6 any nation that can afford the expenditures that are required
7 -- and I think these expenditures are needed, I think they are
8 necessary, I think that they can be fully justified -- in
9 science and technology and learning and in industry, but --
10 and I say what I am allowed to as Chairman of the Space Council,
11 so don't misunderstand me. I support what is going on. I
12 helped design it.

13 But any nation that can afford to spend over \$30
14 billion to put a man on the moon can make the adjustments
15 that are necessary to help put a man on his feet right here
16 on earth.

17 (Applause.)

18 And we are beginning to make those investments. Let
19 me make it quite clear that this year in your federal expendi-
20 tures, there will be some \$25 billion in fiscal 1968 dedicated
21 to opportunity, dedicated to opening up these gates of oppor-
22 tunity. And not only opening up the gates of opportunity for
23 the poor and the needy and for the low-income groups, not
24 only opening those gates but helping people move through.

25 Remember this, it isn't enough sometimes to open the

1 door for a man or woman who is paralyzed. You may have to
2 teach him how to walk through those doors. And many a man in
3 this country, and many a woman, boy and girl who has been the
4 victim of discrimination and bigotry and prejudice and
5 poverty and disadvantage is just as much a cripple and just
6 as much a paralytic as the person who suffers stroke or born
7 with a physical infirmity. We have to teach them how to walk
8 by themselves so that when those doors are open they walk
9 through as men and as women with dignity. That is what we
10 are doing, 500,000 young men and women in the Neighborhood
11 Youth Corps. Not enough, but more than the others wanted us
12 to have.

13 And these efforts and these programs of opportunity
14 -- I changed the name of war on poverty to war on opportunity,
15 I want to say to my friends, too. I think the war on poverty
16 sometimes loses its meaning. What we are realling talking
17 about is an adventure in opportunity, not a war on poverty.
18 We are opening up a whole new horizon for people, a marvelous
19 adventure in the kind of life that you and I have been living,
20 which has been denied to so many people, a great new oppor-
21 tunity adventure.

22 Well, you have 35,000 high school youngsters this
23 year that are coming right out of the bowels of the slums,
24 out of the worst schools, most of them from minority groups,
25 poor blacks, poor whites, poor Mexican-Americans, poor

1 Indians, poor Puerto Ricans -- but with a good I.Q., God-
2 given talent. They have been tested and they have been
3 found -- 35,000 of them have been lifted up out of this muck
4 of poverty and they have been sent on to great universities
5 in what we call Project Upward-Bound. And we are doing mar-
6 velous things.

7 This is what you call human resources being saved,
8 the conservation of what God has given us, the human mind and
9 the human spirit. And I submit that every dollar expended to
10 give those young men and women a chance to an education will
11 come back in a hundred-fold because, as I said to some of
12 them, while you poor and deprived and depraved, you were tax
13 eaters, you were nothing. And now that you have an education
14 and now that you are getting to be self-sufficient and self-
15 sustaining, standing on your own feet, we will get it back.
16 When you get your job, Uncle Sam and the state government
17 and the local government will get that back.

18 (Applause.)

19 Yes, I tell you that there were 16,000 graduates
20 from our Job Corps centers thus far and I know all about the
21 Job Corps, I hear from them all the time. I want to let you
22 in on this truth of the Job Corps service. It has been an
23 expensive program but not nearly as expensive as sending a
24 boy or a girl to a university. If you consider the investment
25 in that university, it is not nearly as expensive. And yet

1 you know the rate of drop-out of the Job Corps centers is
2 less than out of the great universities. It is much less.

3 And, what is more, every boy or girl who goes
4 through the Job Corps center is a drop-out before all eyes.
5 That is right. The average age, the average educational ex-
6 perience is four years. A vast number of them are totally
7 illiterate. In this, the great America, only five per cent
8 of the whole group have ever had any work experience. And
9 the few that have ever had any work experience never earned
10 over 70 cents an hour. Over 80 per cent of them never had
11 a physical examination or a dental examination. They are the
12 leftovers.

13 And yet, these are the young men between the ages of
14 17 and 21 that are volunteering to try to find a new life.
15 Why, you should read what they say. A boy 17 says why -- we
16 ask the question, "Why did you join the Job Corps?" And he
17 looks up at his interview and he says, "I thought it was my
18 last chance." Seventeen years of age -- his last chance,
19 that is what he thought, because everything up until then
20 had been a failure.

21 I know that the rate of drop-out is 35 per cent but
22 I also know that before they went in they were 100 per cent
23 drop-outs. 16,000 graduated, 13,000 of those 16,000 went
24 into paying jobs that averaged \$1.71 an hour; 3,000 went into
25 the military service for which they were not qualified until

1 they got the training and the health care of the Job Corps
2 center. I think they have done pretty well.

3 (Applause.)

4 And there are 31,000 more of them there right now.

5 Well, this is the story I want to tell you. It is
6 not the story of the fulfillment of our promise. It is the
7 story of the keeping of a promise. What did we promise the
8 American people? We didn't promise them pie in the sky. If
9 we did we should be ashamed of ourselves. We didn't promise
10 anybody the soft life because, if we did, we would have been
11 guilty of a gross falsehood. Life is not soft. These are
12 hard times. And, as the President has said repeatedly, this
13 is the time for testing, these are dangerous times, these are
14 the times of the greatest accomplishment. But it has always
15 been thus. Our country hasn't been built by people who were
16 weak-kneed, had no hope, no determination.

17 The history of America and the story of America is
18 the achievement of the impossible. What other people said
19 couldn't be done we said must be done. What other people
20 failed to do we set out to do it and did it. Now that is
21 what we are talking about now.

22 Now, we just can't rest on the laurels of yesterday.
23 It isn't enough to do only what we have done. We must look
24 ahead. There are still people in America who need a better
25 break and they need to have a helping hand so they can help

1 themselves. There are still schools in America that are in-
2 adequate, too few teachers, too inadequate facilities, too
3 old books. There are still needs in the health field in
4 America that need to be filled. And they don't need to be
5 filled by government, they can be filled by your sons and
6 daughters trained as nurses and technicians and doctors, but
7 the government can be a helping partner.

8 There are still needs in America for more skilled
9 workers, for more job opportunities. And only yesterday I
10 met with some of the top businessmen in the San Francisco Bay
11 area and I said to them, "Not only open up your hears but
12 open up your gates, open up your offices, open up your fac-
13 tories and let come into those factories the needy, let come
14 into them the people who don't yet know how to work. Help
15 them. Help let us train them. Help them train themselves."
16 We are not a party that says, "Look, vote for us because of
17 what we have done." We are a political party that says, "It
18 can and must be done, an example of what we can do," because
19 this is a "can do" party. This is the party, this Democratic
20 Party, your party, and your President and your administration,
21 the party that you helped in power, the President that you
22 helped elect, the Vice President that you helped elect, the
23 Congress that you helped elect -- this administration, this
24 President, and this Congress and your government wants to do
25 more. And we need your help and we need you to form yourselves

1 in an army of these kind of workers, in this democracy, to
2 go on out and not only talk about the crops of yesterday or
3 even the harvest of the crop of this season, but rather to
4 plant the seed for the crop yet to be harvested and yet to
5 be brought in.

6 Your dateline -- and everybody needs to have one --
7 is November 1968. And I will tell you that in November 1968
8 you will see at the head of that ticket a man who has gone
9 through travail and trial and tribulation and one who has
10 poured his heart in an effort to lead this country both in
11 peace and war, one who has been the victim of the most un-
12 believable unfair onslaught, but you will see him there with
13 all the courage that a man can have. You will see him there
14 with the same spirit of Franklin Roosevelt, and with the same
15 courage that Harry Truman had, and with the same idealism that
16 John Kennedy had, and with the same experience and determina-
17 tion and perseverance that he has, and that man on the ticket
18 -- and we will be with him, every one of us will be with him
19 -- will be the President of the United States, Lyndon Johnson,
20 and he will be reelected.

21 Thank you.

22 - - -



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