

FILE

VICE PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE TO STATE FEDERAL AID COORDINATORS

Mayflower Hotel, Washington, D.C.

June 12, 1967

The Vice President regrets that he cannot be with you during your important conference here in Washington. Liaison among the various levels of our Federal system is an effort he regards as fundamental to the survival of what he calls, "the American experiment." He has demonstrated his concern for the principle of a Federal system as Mayor of Minneapolis, U.S. Senator and as Vice President. Out of this concern, he has asked me to bring you this message:

"I am heartened by the continuing activity in liaison between the Federal government and the States. President Johnson has demonstrated his personal concern and I am pleased to note the success of the President's conferences with Governors and the continuation of these face-to-face meetings between Federal and State executives. Governor Farris Bryant has been doing an earnest and outstanding job of carrying through with this effort.

"I am also greatly encouraged by the response of the Governors as demonstrated by the number --- which increases almost monthly --- who have appointed Federal Aid Coordinators and created agencies for continuing the liaison function.

"Those who know me say I am an incurable optimist. I am inclined to agree with them. Keeping in character, I expect these efforts to lead to a much stronger Federal system. I say this because the domestic challenge facing our Nation requires cooperation and vitality at every level.

"Although there is new vitality in our Federal system, we do not start from scratch. We have a great heritage of cooperation to build upon. The Federal and State governments built the most productive agriculture the world has ever known. The Federal and State levels of our system have long been cooperating in the fields of health care, education, welfare and road-building. Some of this same cooperation needs now to be focused in new directions.

"Who today is not concerned about water and air pollution? Who today does not realize that a significant portion of our human resources is being wasted? Who does not want to improve the quality of our education, of health care and of life in our cities? I am confident Americans who work in State government are just as concerned as those Americans working in Federal, city and county governments. It is only necessary to build ~~some~~ new bridges of communication to go with the old so that the response of our Federal system matches the on-rush of the challenge facing us.

"I will not attempt to anticipate what Federal officials and the staff members of your National Governors Conference will be telling you, but I expect you are going to be amazed at what they are doing and what they plan to do to help States improve their participation in our system.

"One of the most rewarding duties I have as Vice President is that of the President's liaison officer to mayors and other local government officials. Thanks to staff assistance from H.U.D. and other Federal agencies, I have invited to Washington conferences mayors of all cities over 30,000 population; chief officials of all counties over 50,000, and all city managers. I have called conferences in New England and the Great Lakes States for mayors of all towns under 30,000.

"Although I had some grasp of local problems as a former mayor, my liaison activities during the past two years have greatly enhanced my understanding. Some Governors and other State officials are learning the same way, but there are others who have not turned their attention in that direction. For the States to properly define their role, their officials must become knowledgeable about the problems facing officials of cities and counties because that's where the people are."

"Keep up your good work and we will continue our efforts. The welfare of the people requires the best from all of us. Good wishes for a fruitful conference. Thank you."



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