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Mr. Michaelson
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REMARKS

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VICE PRESIDENT HUBERT HUMPHREY

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PLANS FOR PROGRESS CONFERENCE

WASHINGTON, D.C.

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JANUARY 23, 1968

This morning President Lyndon Johnson delivered
 his Manpower Message to the Congress.

That message marks an historic moment in America's
 quest for equal opportunity. ! - a Partnership!

It discards forever the notion that even in the midst
 of great and continuing prosperity, a stagnant pool of
 unemployment is nonetheless inevitable.

Here, in his own words, is the President's challenge to America: "In an economy capable of sustaining high employment, how can we assure every American, who is willing to work, the right to earn a living?"

Every American...not just most, but each *and every American*

↳ As a nation, we have always believed that each individual has a right and an obligation to earn a living for himself and his family. But that belief has not been fully translated to reality.

His chance!

↳ We all know that there are among us today men and women -- fathers and mothers -- who are denied that opportunity by a legacy of poverty and, often, discrimination.

↳ Not only do they lack marketable skills and even the basic education to learn them. They have been robbed of motivation by a lifetime of dashed hopes.

↳ Most tragic of all are the youngsters -- youngsters who can leave an American school in this last third of the twentieth century unprepared for work or a place in society.

↳ Hard-core unemployment is not right.

↳ It is not necessary.

It costs every taxpayer dollars and cents from his pocket.

↳ It must be stricken from the ^{*economic*} vocabulary of American Democracy.

↳ I know you have been at work on this problem for some time. But we now have a clearly stated national goal before us: full and equal employment opportunity for every American.

Impossible? - no.

President Johnson's proposal is this: A federal Job Opportunities in Business Sector Program -- the initials spell JOBS -- based on a public-interest partnership between the federal government and American free enterprise.

This is not a "make-work" concept.

Nor does it look to institutional training for jobs that may not be available in the labor market.

It looks to the place where six out of seven jobs are, and should be: private industry.

Under the President's JOBS proposal, our federal government will:

-- pay all the extra costs involved in training the disadvantaged for steady employment;

-- identify the hard-core unemployed to be trained;

-- provide whatever special support services are required to make the partnership a success --

transportation...coaching...health services...

literacy programs...counselling -- either directly

or through subsidies to the private employer.

↳ That is what we will do. What about industry?

↳ Industry, for its part, will be called upon to pay
the normal cost of training any new employee and then
offer their trainees employment.

↳ Our target: 100 thousand of the present hard-core
unemployed working on the job by June, 1969, and
500 thousand by June, 1971.

↳ The JOBS program is new, but it encompasses and
takes advantage of several ongoing manpower programs which
have already given us some useful experience in public-private
cooperation in job training.

↳ The Manpower Development Training Act of 1962 -- conceived originally as an instrument for encouraging the private sector to upgrade skills of existing employees -- has grown into a program for training the disadvantaged.

↳ Job Corps camps, many of which are operated on contract by private industry, have developed new training techniques. In 1969, the Job Corps will serve nearly 100 thousand young people from disadvantaged backgrounds.

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The Neighborhood Youth Corps will offer training to over 560 thousand.

↳ Work Experience, New Careers, Operation Mainstream and the Work Incentive Program -- are all directed at low income adults.

↳ The Concentrated Employment Program -- designed to reach out to the hard-core unemployed with counselling

and training -- will soon be operating in 76 urban and rural areas, and President Johnson has asked that it be extended to 70 more. — Total 146

These programs are still somewhat experimental.

But at the same time they are all producing results.

↳ Last year, 1967, they provided new hope and opportunity for more than a million Americans. 1963 - 33,000 Training
1967 1,300,000 " Training

↳ They give us a running start. And they will remain central ingredients within the new JOBS package.

↳ Mr. Henry Ford II has agreed, at the President's request, to head a National Alliance of Businessmen to make this program work. FORD

↳ The Alliance will have more than operational responsibilities. It will advise the federal government on policy and planning -- for this is to be a true partnership of equals.

↳ Many of you will serve in that Alliance. I know all of you will support it.

↳ There will be trial and error.

↳ There will be temporary failures.

There will be some people so downtrodden, or lacking in hope and ambition, that they will not seize their new opportunity the first time, and perhaps not the second or the third.

↳ And there will be impatience among those who must wait a few months longer for an opportunity so long desired.

↳ But with the creative energy of American industry behind us...in a period of unparalleled prosperity...in an economy that produces a million and a half new jobs a year -- I think our chances of success are good.

Now I want to say a word to you not only as responsible businessmen, but as leaders in the struggle against discrimination in employment.

While the problem of hard-core unemployment is based on a complex of personal disabilities -- in education, in training, in attitudes -- there is no denying that it is also a product, to a very large degree, of racial discrimination.

And that discrimination occurs not only at the personnel office door but at every rung of the employment ladder, as well as in the community at large.

Last fall I sent a check-list to each of the 417 Plans for Progress companies to assist them in evaluating their own performance on equal employment opportunity. Many companies have told me that the questionnaire prompted a useful review, and I hope that was your experience.

↳ I expect to report to you by letter on some of the results regarding recruitment, testing, job training and the appointment of equal employment officers.

Report

↳ Let me only say now that discrimination is still the number one stumbling block in our quest for equal employment opportunity -- one that shows up in testing and training as much as in recruitment and promotion.

↳ I say ^{this} ~~that~~ not to criticize past efforts, but to indicate that the discrimination problem is by no means behind us. ↳ Our ability to deal with it successfully may well determine the outcome of any new attack on hard-core unemployment.

↳ For even if we do succeed in giving every hard-core unemployed worker marketable skills and a job, we will not give him real opportunity or real hope

...until his own advancement prospects equal any man's,

...and until he can look up the employment ladder
all the way to the top and see other Negro Americans,
other Mexican Americans, other Puerto Rican
Americans, other Indian Americans succeeding on
the basis of their qualifications alone.

And there must be full and equal opportunity outside
the plant walls as well. That newly-employed worker needs
incentive -- the knowledge that he can save to own a home
in a decent neighborhood...the assurance that his children
will receive a decent education...the guarantee that his
efforts will earn him a full share in America.

The hard-core unemployed are few in number. But
they symbolize the unfinished business of American
democracy -- the business of making good on the promise of
life, liberty and pursuit of happiness for every individual.

That is no small challenge, nor can it be postponed.

But it is by no means beyond the capacities --
physical or moral -- of this nation.

As the President said last Wednesday,

↳ "If ever there were a people who sought
more than mere abundance, it is our people.

↳ "If ever there were a Nation capable of solving
its problems, it is this Nation.

↳ "If ever there were a time to know the pride
and excitement and hope of being an American --
it is this time. "

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