

## NOTES

VICE PRESIDENT HUBERT HUMPHREY

NATIONAL ALLIANCE OF BUSINESSMEN MEETING

WASHINGTON, D.C.

FEBRUARY 23, 1968

It is a pleasure for me to meet with the men who will be carrying forward the program of the National Alliance of Businessmen in our 50 largest cities.

You have heard this many times today but let me repeat it once again: the success or the failure of the entire program depends upon you.

There is nothing Henry Ford can do, nor Secretary Wirtz, nor Secretary Smith, nor even the Vice President, which can equal your role in this program. If you succeed, the program succeeds. If you fail, the program fails.

It's that simple.

By this time in the afternoon, I suspect some of you may be a little lost in the thicket of procedures and organizational structures which have been discussed. Your chairman, Henry Ford II, the National Executive Committee, and especially the Executive Vice Chairman, Leo Beebe, have labored valiantly to produce in less than one month's time the national apparatus for conducting this program.

As we strive to understand the problem of reaching and hiring the hard-core unemployed, we must always keep our central objective in sight: to upgrade America's most valuable natural resource -- trained, productive, employable workers.

I don't want to spend much time talking of the economic and social costs of unemployed men and women. Of course, we pay in terms of lost productivity, higher taxes and higher welfare payments.

But we also pay the costs of social unrest, civil disorder, and a gradual eroding of peoples' faith in our democratic system of government and our free market economy.

For all these reasons, President Johnson called for the National Alliance of Businessmen to assume primary responsibility in reaching and hiring 500 thousand hard-core unemployed, as well as 200 thousand disadvantaged young people during the summer.

The President called on the business community because six out of every seven jobs are there. He recognized that on-the-job training has been our most effective employment program. Indeed, nine out of 10 people who have participated in on-the-job programs have been subsequently hired by private industry.

The President knew that our economy has been creating more than a million and a half jobs each year. Today, 75 million Americans are at work; less than 3 million are unemployed.

And the President believed you could reach half a million hard-core unemployed who have not been included in this steady expansion and who are not likely to be unless special steps are taken.

You are here to take those steps.

I would like to mention briefly one aspect of the program in which I am particularly interested.

I am privileged to serve as the Chairman of the President's Council on Youth Opportunity. One of the Council's major assignments is to coordinate at the federal level a variety of programs designed to assist disadvantaged youth in jobs, education, recreation, and related programs.

We are particularly concerned with the special needs faced by disadvantaged youngsters during the summer months.

Most of these young people will face a summer of unemployment and enforced idleness when they might otherwise be engaged in activities which would help liberate them from the cycle of poverty.

I have often described the summer as a time of opportunity for our young people. It should<sup>not</sup> be a time that is empty or even filled with make-work projects of one sort or another. Indeed, summer should be a time to expand a young person's horizons, to provide valuable work experience, and to demonstrate there is a place in our society for those who try.

For the past three years the President's Youth Opportunity Campaign, our summer job program, has successfully encouraged many employers to hire extra young people during the summer months. But the Youth Opportunity Campaign did not reach into the disadvantaged areas of our major cities. Here unemployment was as high as ever, frequently over 30 per cent for the non-white youngsters between the ages of 16 and 21.

This summer we must do a better job. We must, in fact, take special steps to see that these youngsters are given a chance to discover that summer can be a time of opportunity for them.

In his charge to the National Alliance of Businessmen, President Johnson challenged you to provide 200 thousand jobs this summer for disadvantaged young men and women.

Phil Zuckerman

Will  
use  
it  
later

The National Executive Committee and the staff of the Alliance have been designing an operating structure which can achieve simultaneously this goal of summer hiring and the longer-term goal of 500 thousand jobs for the hard-core unemployed.

In many cases a summer job for a potential school drop-out will keep that young person in school and prevent him from becoming the hard-core unemployed worker of tomorrow.

As we have stressed before, it is not just enough to provide disadvantaged youngsters with a make-work job. We must take the additional step of guaranteeing that this job will be challenging, interesting, and with a certain amount of responsibility attached to it. We expect summer employees to earn their money.

The federal government itself will almost double its hiring of disadvantaged young people this summer -- from nearly 40 thousand last year to 70 thousand in 1968. Federal summer hiring will exceed the ratio of 2 special summer hires for every 100 regular federal employees.

But the critical test in our ability to provide meaningful job opportunities will be the response of the private sector.

We are counting on each of you to organize the kind of program in your respective cities which will achieve our quotas and put the total program over the top.

This will require close coordination with various groups in your community already at work on other aspects of summer activities.

You will, for example, want to keep in touch with the Youth Coordinator in your city, the man who will coordinate other elements of the summer program, your Community Action Agency or Mayor and the many voluntary groups.

I know the Alliance staff will provide you with more details of these local arrangements which are so crucial to success.

Let me underline one additional element in a successful program: You must actively seek out the disadvantaged youngsters themselves in planning your recruitment and training procedures. Their participation at the earliest stages of planning and implementation will insure the access and the relevance to their needs which are essential to a successful program.

We cannot, and we must not, and with America's vital free enterprise system, we need not, tolerate any longer the waste of human resources, the frustration, the injustice that hard-core unemployment and summer unemployment imply.

I know the American business community is ready to meet this challenge. And I know that we stand ready to do anything in our power to help make your effort a resounding success.

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