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cc Sen Eugene McCarthy May 31

Building Constructors
AFL-CIO



FOR RELEASE: MARCH 28th, THURSDAY PM's

OFFICE OF THE VICE PRESIDENT

EXCERPTS FROM THE SPEECH OF THE VICE PRESIDENT HUBERT HUMPHREY
13th LEGISLATIVE CONFERENCE OF THE BUILDING CONSTRUCTION TRADES
DEPARTMENT, AFL-CIO

WASHINGTON, D. C. -- March 28, 1968

Vice President Humphrey today said that the Johnson-Humphrey Administration "has offered new Charter of Hope to millions of left-out Americans."

"Our Administration is an opportunity administration," he said.

"It is a life-saving administration."

"It is an administration that says: Give every man a chance."

The Vice President made these remarks when addressing the 13th Legislative Conference of the Building Construction Trades Department.

The Vice President praised the recent controversial report of the National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders as "a comprehensive, in-depth analysis of social, economic and psychological problems facing the American people today."

Humphrey said, "I want to make it clear once and for all: I believe the most important and principal conclusions of the report are right. I commend the report and thank its authors."

"It is not an obituary for a dead society," the Vice President continued. "It is a health report on a nation in turmoil, ferment and change."

The Vice President called President Johnson's messages to Congress on manpower, the urban crisis, law enforcement and crime control "a major first installment on the principal recommendations of the National Advisory Commission."

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OFFICE OF THE VICE PRESIDENT

Page 2

But he emphasized that the United States must make a national commitment to overcome the problem spelled out in the Commission Report.

"It requires determination on the part of state and local officials -- mayors, chiefs-of-police, city councils -- that justice shall be available to every citizen. It requires fair attitudes and fair practices -- fair human relations on the part of every citizen."

"The poor and left-out need the positive and affirmative help of all Americans in finding work . . . in finding skills . . . in finding hope," said the Vice President.

The Vice President noted a new moral concern in America which is expressed in a determination to eliminate slums, poverty and hard-core unemployment. The Vice President praised the building trades unions for their job training programs in Tennessee and Northern California, and welcomed their pledge to eliminate discrimination in apprenticeship and hiring practices.

The Vice President called upon the union members to support President Lyndon Johnson now and in the election, saying that Johnson would "certainly" be the Democratic candidate.



OFFICE OF THE VICE PRESIDENT

FOR RELEASE:

THURSDAY PM'S
MARCH 28, 1968

REMARKS OF VICE PRESIDENT HUMPHREY
THE 13TH NATIONAL LEGISLATIVE CONFERENCE
OF THE BUILDING CONSTRUCTION TRADES
DEPARTMENT -- AFL-CIO
WASHINGTON, D.C.
MARCH 28, 1968

We used to call upon our unions to sustain the rights of labor.

Today we call upon them to expand the rights of man.

That is the urgent business before America today.

America has adopted a new moral concern.

Once it was said that the poor would always be with us.

Today we know that poverty is a national shame that can and must be wiped out.

Once many Americans thought a "cushion" of hard-core unemployment was an economic necessity.

Today almost all Americans condemn it as a social tragedy and economic waste.

Once slums were considered inevitable in the landscape of industrialization.

Today we recognize them as a blight that must be eliminated.

Once many believed that America could comfortably and indefinitely house two societies -- separate and unequal.

Today we know we must create "one nation, under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all" -- or fail as a free people.

The American labor movement has always played a vital and effective role in helping citizens lift themselves into real citizenship in this country.

The free labor movement has been a bridge -- a bridge to self-respect and human dignity -- for millions of Americans.

Today there are Americans who have yet to cross that bridge.

Many of those Americans have skins that don't happen to be white. Some are, in a sense, refugees.

They cannot return to the rural poverty from which they or their parents fled.

But they don't have the jobs, the skills, the education and training to make their way alone in an America that glitters and shines with prosperity wherever they turn.



OFFICE OF THE VICE PRESIDENT

PAGE 2

Depression in America? Not in my neighborhood or yours.

But there are streets and neighborhoods in America today where unemployment or underemployment rates are as high as 35 per cent.

This is depression in these streets and neighborhoods.

What happens to the children there?

What will become of them?

What happens to America in the years ahead when the invoices of poverty and discrimination in these streets and neighborhoods come due for payment by our society as a whole?

The recent report of the National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders tells the story of these streets and neighborhoods.

So there will be no misunderstanding, I want to make it clear once and for all: I believe the more important and principal conclusions of the report are right. I commend the report and thank its authors.

This report is a full diagnosis of the urban crisis.

It is a comprehensive, in-depth analysis of social, economic, and psychological problems facing the American people today.

It is not an obituary for a dead society. It is a health report on a nation in turmoil, ferment and change.

It documents the challenges facing a country striving to overcome generations of discrimination, alienation, and deprivation, and does it well.

Most importantly, the Commission's report calls for a national commitment of physical and human resources commensurate to this challenge.

Federal government must and will make its contribution to this effort.

Much has already been achieved at the federal level.

President Johnson's messages to the Congress this year -- especially those dealing with manpower, the urban crisis, and law enforcement and crime control -- stand as a major first installment on the principal recommendations of the National Advisory Commission.

But this national commitment requires far more than action by the federal government...and more than new laws to abolish segregation and guarantee equal opportunity.

It requires determination on the part of state and local officials -- mayors, chiefs of police, city councils -- that justice shall be available to every citizen.



OFFICE OF THE VICE PRESIDENT

PAGE 3

It requires fair attitudes and fair practices -- fair human relations on the part of every citizen.

There are things that can be done now in every city, in every industry, in every community to affirm the American promise of full and equal opportunity.

The poor and left-out of America need to know that the war on poverty is more than a federal government activity...and that all of us, as people, mean to wage this war with all our hearts.

They need to know by action and deed that community services, for instance -- yes, city services -- will be brought to them just as to us.

It is a fact that in the areas of our urban centers, that are poorest, the municipal services are likely to be the worst.

That is where the garbage is collected least often.

The schools are often obsolete and ramshackle.

The playgrounds and park services are inadequate or nonexistent.

The incidence of crime is highest...but law enforcement is poorest.

Parking tickets are given out right and left...but seldom a ticket for a building code violation.

But more than that, the poor and leftout need the positive and affirmative help of all Americans in finding work...in finding skills...in finding hope.

They have heard, all their lives, America say 'no!'

Today they must hear America say 'yes!'

In so doing we will be acting to prevent the separation of our beloved America into two separate and unequal societies.

That separation need not happen.

It must not.

It will not, if we respond by saying 'yes!'

Now I know you have begun to do your share, and I congratulate you.

In programs like those of the Operating Engineers in Jacob's Creek, Tennessee, and in Northern California, union men are training inner city young people to enter the trades. And these young people are being placed on the job -- not on the street.



OFFICE OF THE VICE PRESIDENT

PAGE 4

I am proud of the exchange of letters between President Haggerty and Secretary Wirtz -- pledging the support of 3 and a half million buildings trades workers in efforts -- and let me quote them -- "efforts to eliminate, once and for all, discrimination on the basis of race, color, creed and national origin."

Your pledge is really America's pledge.

America is saying "Look, this can work. These free union people know the problem and they are working toward solutions."

I have worked with America's unions for a long-time. I know what your pledge means.

But do the people you want to help now?

After all, they have heard pledges before...some of them as old as our nation -- like the promise of equal opportunity for every man. And some of those pledges have yet to be fulfilled.

They know the system as it has been. A crew goes off on a job. And there is a low man...the one the crew picks up on one of the "shape-up" street corners in town.

Maybe that man "makes it" well enough to be part of the job tomorrow. Maybe he doesn't. Maybe there is no job tomorrow; or the crew is heading in a different direction, past a different "shape-up."

Or maybe, because he long ago lost hope, the man just isn't there at all.

The building trades are not the only ones where this is the way it is. And generations of other immigrant populations have endured the same.

There are many of you can recall that this burden seemed lighter when you could come to believe that eventually things would be different.

The hand that mixes the "mud" or carries the pails or lugs the pipe or sorts the lumber -- nothing ordains that hand be black.

The hand that welds the hawk or planes the chamfer or connects the wire -- nothing ordains that hand be white.

The man who seems to drift on the perimeter of the job -- the "add-on"...nothing ordains that man be black.

The man who seems to know what's going on...the man in charge... in fact, the man they call "The Man" -- nothing ordains that man be white.



OFFICE OF THE VICE PRESIDENT

PAGE 5

We should ask only one question: Does he have the necessary skills for his job? And has he been given an equal chance to acquire these skills?

It is the nature of labor demand today that primary job opportunities for thousands of our poor people will continue to be in the construction trades in our cities.

With your help, that demand can provide a bridge for today's left-out Americans, just as it has for other waves of migrant peoples who have found a bridge to the American way of life through the building trades.

Today's migrants into the mainstream of America may have some special disadvantages -- ones our society has imposed upon them.

But you have done the job before when new generations of Americans needed a helping hand -- and I know you can do it again.

We can help build streets and neighborhoods and cities where children grow up straight and honest and strong.

We can show the world what Americans can do -- when they roll their sleeves up.

This is my job. This is your job.

The sign President Truman used to keep in his office tells the story: "The Buck Stops Here."

* * * *

This is the Administration that is pledged to 500 thousand jobs for hard-core unemployed.

This is the Administration that has invested twice as much in education in the last four years as the federal government invested in the previous century.

This is the Administration that is investing three times as much in health programs in 1968 as was invested in 1964.

Our Administration -- it is yours as much as mine -- has offered a new Charter of Hope to millions of left-out Americans.

Our Administration is an opportunity Administration.

It is a life-saving Administration.

It is an Administration that says: Give every man a chance.

Judge him by what he can do -- not where he was born or what his name is.



OFFICE OF THE VICE PRESIDENT

PAGE 6

It is an Administration that says: We are going to build this country so strong and so free that no one will ever shake it down.

Now America is about to negotiate a new four year contract -- and that contract won't be subject to renegotiation.

America will choose between a Republican candidate -- you know him, Mr. Richard Nixon, and a Democratic leader -- certainly President Lyndon B. Johnson.

America will choose between the old, familiar Republican Coalition of Retreat and your President and your policies -- a President and policies that have moved America ahead farther in the last four years than in any previous decade.

We have been partners in politics and partners in progress for a long time.

Now is the time we must make that partnership work -- on the job, in our neighborhoods...on behalf of the President who stands for what we stand for.

We have done it before. And we have won. We can do it again.

I ask your help.

#

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Neil
President Haggerty
Frank Rofferty
Bishop Williams
Dave Roe!

REMARKS

VICE PRESIDENT HUBERT HUMPHREY

THE 13th NATIONAL LEGISLATIVE CONFERENCE OF
THE BUILDING CONSTRUCTION TRADES DEPARTMENT -- AFL-CIO
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MARCH 28, 1968

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yes, The American labor movement has always played a vital and effective role in helping citizens lift themselves into real citizenship in this country.

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↳ Today there are Americans who have yet to cross that bridge *and they need your help*

↳ Many of those Americans have skins that don't happen to be white. Some are, in a sense, refugees!

They cannot return to the rural poverty from which they or their parents fled.

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Can it be that there is

↳ Depression in America? Not in my neighborhood
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But there are streets and neighborhoods in America
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invoices of poverty and discrimination in these streets and
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~~whole~~ *We've seen what happens in fact too
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