



## OFFICE OF THE VICE PRESIDENT

THURSDAY PM  
May 2, 1968

REMARKS OF VICE PRESIDENT HUBERT HUMPHREY  
ANNUAL MEETING OF THE  
PRESIDENT'S COMMITTEE ON EMPLOYMENT OF THE HANDICAPPED  
WASHINGTON, D. C.  
MAY 2, 1968

You know how much these annual meetings of this Committee have come to mean to me.

This is one Vice Presidential function I discharge not from duty but from strong personal desire. I look forward, incidentally, to exercising it next year -- on a slightly different basis.

I guess I think there is no more intensely human interest than the one this Committee serves.

I think, too, that there is no other area in which we are making faster progress toward realizing man's essential humanity to man. For a basic, powerful change is going on today in the whole idea of what "being handicapped" means.

It used to mean being disqualified -- ruled out.

Today, almost suddenly in most people's thinking, it has come to mean taking part in things -- even if on a little different basis.

There is all the difference in the world here -- almost the difference for the handicapped person, between being and not being.

For the difference is between having a right to be helped and having the right and opportunity to contribute -- to give as well as to get -- which is a lot of what self-respect means -- and having meaning as an individual instead of having to wonder what sense life makes.

Being disqualified was a retarded child's being denied an education if that child couldn't keep up with an educational system designed to prepare youngsters in 12 years to go to college.

It was being denied employment if you had multiple sclerosis or cerebral palsy or had ever been in a mental hospital.

It was an epileptic's being denied a driver's license even though his seizures were controlled.

The meanest, most thoughtless disqualification was a man or woman in a wheel chair being denied entrance to a building -- or a bathroom -- because it had steps or because the door was too narrow.

Disqualification was a handicapped person's being denied the right to be useful because our whole system of mass transportation depended on being able to climb stairs.

The idea of disqualification is dead. It isn't the way we think anymore.

A lot of the architectural barriers -- ruins of the old idea -- still remain. A brilliant, attractive 18 year-old boy who came to Washington with his family for Easter vacation this year didn't get up into the Lincoln Memorial or as close as he wanted to John Kennedy's grave -- because he must live on a litter and it couldn't be wheeled up the steps.

Eighty percent of those who look for employment after they leave a mental hospital -- fully "cured" -- feel they have to leave that off their records if they want to get a job.

Yet in a very real sense, the thinking about physically and mentally handicapped people today is that their right is not to be disqualified and then cared for, but to participate -- to as full an extent of their capacity as anybody else.

The phrase "sheltered work shops" grates on me. That isn't the idea. And the practice of handicapped people gathering there every day to do dull, monotonous meaningless work -- at pay rates fixed by what it would cost machines to do that work -- comes out of another century.

Your Women's Committee's Project Earning Power is a great step away from that ugly human anachronism.

But a great deal more needs to be done.

Is it right to grant exemptions to the minimum wage law so that those who are employed in sheltered workshops labor at the meanest work at less than the statutory wage?

Don't they need the minimum more than most people?

Wouldn't it be better to subsidize those workshops, if necessary, so that a fair day's work there will result in a fair day's pay -- like everyplace else?

This seems to me to make sense at least to the extent of government reimbursement for training costs for those men and women in these workshops who have the capacity to do so much more than they are doing.

The terms of President Johnson's JOBS program are sufficiently broad to permit the reimbursement of private employers for the special on-the-job training costs of those who are disadvantaged because of their twisted limbs as well as those who have been discriminated against because of their race.

I urge the further consideration of these possibilities -- by the responsible offices in the Department of Labor and the Department of Health, Education and Welfare -- by the National Alliance of Businessmen -- and, if necessary, by the Congress.

I urge even more strongly the recognition by people generally of all the ways in which we can implement the new realization that disqualification of those who are handicapped is wrong -- that they are entitled to the right to take part.

Those of us who have been close to the fact of handicap, in ourselves or in our families, know how much tenderness can mean -- but how empty and self-serving sympathy is -- that it can sting more than it softens -- weaken more than it strengthens.

Shake hands with Harold Russell -- match your smile with his -- and feel the smallness of being solicitous drain out of you.

Listen to Senator Dan Inouye's story of his gratitude to the nurse who made him light his own match and his own cigarette when he wakened in a battlefield hospital bed to find he had only one arm.

A lot can be done by doing what comes naturally.

But there is a lot more to do, too.

Suppose every businessman here today checked his hiring practices to see whether the forms ask about previous mental treatment -- and if they do, what the reaction is to an affirmative answer.

Suppose, then, all job descriptions were checked to see whether there are less skilled elements in three or four jobs that could be combined into one that someone in a wheel chair could perform.

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The Committee on Disabled Veterans advises me that among the largest barriers to the employment of men who come back from service having paid a higher price for it is that seniority clauses, pension plans, and workmens' compensation practices make an employer hesitate about taking them on. Suppose you here today who are union officials checked into this.

Suppose those here today who are builders or architects, or who are responsible for any new construction, were to check every blue-print to see whether there are ramps as well as steps.

Suppose every woman here who does her own shopping were to ask the local manager at the supermarket whether he hires the handicapped.

Suppose everybody here who owns a share of stock were to drop a note to the corporate headquarters asking what the company's policies are about hiring handicapped people.

There's something else:

Over 2 million American workers suffer disabling injuries every year. This means that 500 have been hurt badly just while I've been talking.

Many of these injuries are so serious that the person involved is going to be, from here on, a "handicapped person."

It is time for those of us who are concerned about employment of the handicapped to help out by cutting down the number of employed who become handicapped.

Suppose everyone in this room wrote his Senator and his Congressman asking him to support the Workers Safety Bill which President Johnson has sent to Congress and which it now has before it.

Meetings such as this aren't just for listening to speeches. They are for getting something done.

One of my purposes this year is going to be to try to make it clearer how people can take a more effective part in making this country of ours what we want it to be.

Harold Russell tells me we need more local Committees on Employment of the Handicapped. I add my urging to his.

Beyond this, my message to you today is that we can -- not just as voters and taxpayers, but as individuals -- do most for those we call "handicapped" by insisting that none of them be disqualified -- that their right is to participate. For this -- and nothing less -- is what living means.

Now I have the privilege of presenting the President's trophy to a dear friend of mine, Max Rheinberger.

Max is not anybody's beneficiary. He is a full participant in his society -- who lives more for others than for himself. He has reached out to others -- with compassion -- but even more with a message of honest hope -- and most of all with the means to prepare themselves for equal opportunity.

We thank him -- in the President's name -- and on behalf of the nation.

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Sec Wertz

Harold Russell

REMARKS

Eric Severid  
Max Rheunberger

VICE PRESIDENT HUBERT HUMPHREY

ANNUAL MEETING OF THE

THE PRESIDENT'S COMMITTEE ON EMPLOYMENT OF THE HANDICAPPED

WASHINGTON, D.C.

MAY 2, 1968

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∟ The idea of disqualification is dead! It isn't the way we think anymore.

∟ A lot of the architectural barriers -- ruins of the old idea -- still remain. (A brilliant, attractive 18 year-old boy who came to Washington with his family for Easter vacation this year didn't get up into the Lincoln Memorial or as close as he wanted to John Kennedy's grave -- because he must live on a litter and it couldn't be wheeled up the steps.)

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(Jane Wertz)

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For this -- and nothing less -- is what living means.

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*of Minn  
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*Holmes*

THE PRESIDENT'S COMMITTEE ON EMPLOYMENT OF THE HANDICAPPED  
Washington, D. C.

OFFICIAL TRANSCRIPT OF PROCEEDINGS

ANNUAL MEETING

of

THE PRESIDENT'S COMMITTEE ON EMPLOYMENT OF THE HANDICAPPED

DATE: May 2 and 3, 1968

PLACE: Washington Hilton Hotel  
Washington, D. C.

REMARKS OF VICE PRESIDENT HUBERT H. HUMPHREY

MORNING SESSION  
May 2, 1968

Reporter:

Richard L. Shaw

REMARKS OF VICE PRESIDENT HUBERT HUMPHREY  
MORNING SESSION  
May 2, 1968

SECRETARY WIRTZ: Thank you, Harold.

I would like to add just one other line from the, "Man From La Mancha;" what Mary Switzer said to you this morning. "Courage is a line that is warm and real and sticks in our minds." But it seems to me that there is another line in that play that fits particularly the situation of the handicapped and the group here this morning, which finds its satisfactions in other ways. That line is a simple little line. "Facts can be the enemy of truth." It's the truth that is on our minds here this morning and the facts diminish into utter insignificance.

Of the speaker it is my privilege to introduce, I confess that I have been placed officially under certain inhibition which will restrain my otherwise extended remarks. It is very easy to do this very briefly and probably more words would only spoil it. I would like you to know one thing that he would tell me I should not have mentioned, but you should know. The Vice President has come here this morning to this group from the hospital, from Mrs. Humphrey who was operated on. She is fine. But a man who will come to speak to this group under those circumstances does not need any more introduction, except that I am going to do this: I am going to repeat for you the words which were used under very similar circumstances, but on a very different occasion, just last week, and they are his words, but I would like to make them my introduction of him. "A loving and good family, mayor of my city, senator from my State, Vice President of my country,

believer in my country, in the future and in the brotherhood of man."

The Vice President of the United States.

VICE PRESIDENT HUMPHREY: Thank you very much.

Thank you Secretary Wirtz, and thank you my good friend, Willard Wirtz, and my special thanks to Harold Russell, a long time friend. Harold, you will be pleased to note, I hope at least, that as you were standing here at the podium, that Willard Wirtz and Hubert Humphrey were saying, "What a fellow! What a wonderful man, this fellow, Harold Russell." And we mean it. You are just great.

How singularly honored this audience is to have heard from Eric Sevareid, one of our most distinguished commentators and scholars, but above all, a wonderful man and a fine gentleman. To share in his friendship is indeed a precious gift. I have had that gift and I surely honor it and treasure it.

It is good to see Max Rheinberger here and his wife. It is good to be present when a really distinguished Minnesotan is being honored.

To all of the honored guests that are here this morning, may I in the spirit of this very unusual and inspiring occasion, just wish you well and greet you. I thank Willard for telling you why we were delayed. I did not want to leave until Mrs. Humphrey was out of the operating room. But I, frankly, had to leave to speak before she returned to her room. But all is well. I knew it would be well with Mom. She is the best member of the family. Things generally work out well for her. Those of you who are repeaters at this conference

have heard me so many times that I know what you are saying now.

"What is he going to say this time?" Well, I'm not quite sure.

But I have a few thoughts here that I would like to share with you.

The first thought is that you know how much I enjoy coming to these annual meetings. I consider this one of the most important gatherings in Washington. This is a meeting of people, as Eric Sevareid said, who exemplify courage and faith, and also exemplify achievement. I always get a lift out of coming here. I really know what it means to be healed when I see people who have done what some of our friends in this audience have been able to accomplish. You feel very inadequate too when you remember the times that you have griped and grouched around about some little thing that may have troubled you, when you see someone like our Man of the Year, Max, here. You just ought to be ashamed of yourself for ever having complained at all. I guess this is a time for confession, but if I can gain a little extra strength this morning by doing so, then I have done it.

This is one Vice Presidential function I discharge not from duty but from strong personal desire. I look forward, incidentally, to exercising it next year, on a slightly different basis, possibly. So you won't think I am partisan or even political, may I say on a slightly different basis, either public or private. I am glad I didn't hear too much applause for the private part.

I guess I think there is no more intensely human interest than the one this committee serves.

I think, too, that there is no other area in which we are making faster progress toward realizing man's essential humanity

to man. For a basic, powerful change is going on today in the whole idea of what being handicapped means. Oh, so many changes taking place today. Is it any wonder that we have a little difficulty adjusting ourselves to them.

You know, being handicapped, used to mean being disqualified, ruled out. Today, almost suddenly in most people's thinking, it has come to mean taking part in things, participation, even if on a little different basis.

There is all the difference in the world here, almost the difference for the handicapped person, between being and not being.

For the difference is between having a right to be helped and having the right and opportunity to contribute, to give as well as to get, which is a lot of what self-respect means, and having meaning as an individual instead of having to wonder what sense life really makes.

Being disqualified was a retarded child's being denied an education if that child couldn't keep up with an educational system designed to prepare normal youngsters in 12 years to go to college. I guess this audience knows how I feel about this matter. And to every educator here and every taxpayer, let me say that everyone of God's children, every one is entitled to a full measure of community cooperation. Every one is entitled to an opportunity, retarded or not retarded. Let our school systems understand that. In fact, maybe a little more ought to be done for those who at least can help themselves.

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The meanest, most thoughtless disqualification was a man or woman in a wheel chair being denied entrance to a building, or even a bathroom, because it had steps or because the door was too narrow.

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The idea of disqualification should be, and I think is, dead. It isn't the way we should think anymore.

A lot of the architectural barriers, ruins of the old idea, still remain, I know. A brilliant, attractive 18 year-old boy who came to Washington with his family for Easter vacation this year didn't get up into the Lincoln Memorial or as close as he wanted to John Kennedy's grave, because he must live on a litter and it couldn't be wheeled up the steps.

Eighty percent of those who look for employment after they leave a mental hospital, fully cured, feel they have to leave that off their records if they want to get a good job.

Yet, in a very real sense, the thinking about physically and mentally handicapped people today is that their right is not to be disqualified and then cared for, but to participate to as full an extent of their capacity as anybody else.

The phrase, for example, "sheltered work shops" kind of worries

me on occasion. That isn't the idea. And the practice of handicapped people gathering there every day to do dull, monotonous meaningless work, at pay rates fixed by what it would cost machines to do that work, I think comes out of another century.

Your Women's Committee's Project Earning Power is a great step away from that ugly human anachronism. I am happy to say that one of the prime movers in the Women's Committee's Project Earning Power is the very charming and talented and gifted wife of Willard Wirtz, Jane Wirtz. She is a wonderful lady.

But a great deal more needs to be done. I ask a few questions of this audience today. Is it right to grant exemptions to the minimum wage law so that those who are employed in sheltered workshops, labor at the meanest work at less than the statutory wage? Don't they need the minimum wage more than most people? Wouldn't it be better to subsidize those workshops, if necessary, so that a fair day's work there will result in a fair day's pay, like everywhere else? This seems to me to make sense at least to the extent of government reimbursement for training costs for those men and women in these workshops who have the capacity to do so much more than they are doing. The terms of the President's JOBS program, the National Alliance of Businessmen, those terms are sufficiently broad to permit the reimbursement of private employers for the special on-the-job training costs of those who are disadvantaged because of their twisted limbs as well as those who have been discriminated against because of their race. You see, what I am telling you is, we have the machinery to do this job.

We have the law. We just have to have the idea. Just as we are now willing to have the government cooperate with private industry to train, hire and place what are called hard core unemployed in private industry, and done by private industry, I submit that we ought to have the same feeling, the same action and the same policy, and we do have, for those specialized training needs of the disadvantaged because of a handicap. And the industrialists and the company can be repaid for those costs, so that a person can have meaningful work.

I urge the further consideration of these possibilities by the responsible officers in our government. One of them, of course, is more than willing, the Secretary of Labor of the Department of Labor, and the Secretary of the Department of Health, Education and Welfare. I also urge these possibilities of training on the job by the National Alliance of Businessmen, and if necessary, and we need new legislation, then by the Congress. I urge even more strongly the recognition by people generally of all the ways in which we can implement the new realization that disqualification of those who are handicapped is wrong, morally wrong, socially wrong and economically wrong, and that they are entitled to take part in this country to the utmost of their capacity.

Those of us who have been close to the fact of handicap, in ourselves or in our families, know how much tenderness can mean, but how empty and self-serving sympathy is, that it can sting more than it softens, weaken more than it strengthens.

Shake hands with Harold Russell, match your smile with his, and feel the smallness of being solicitous drain right out of you.

Listen to Senator Dan Inouye's story of his gratitude to the nurse who made him light his own match and his own cigarette when he wakened in a battlefield hospital bed to find he had only one arm. A lot things can be done by doing what comes naturally. But there is a lot more to do.

Suppose every businessman here today checked his hiring practices to see whether the forms that you have to fill out if you want a job, to see whether those forms ask about previous mental treatment, and if they do, what the reaction is to an affirmative answer.

Suppose, then, all job descriptions were checked to see whether there are less skilled elements in three or four jobs that could be combined into one that someone in a wheel chair could perform. In other words, suppose we became a little ingenious and use our knowledge, upgrade our imagination, to find ways and means of using every bit of human capacity that we have in this country. Just think what this would add to America. Think of what it would add to our wealth. But, oh, how more important it is to think of what it would add to the genuine happiness of this nation if people who are presently disabled because of low skill were trained and received the skills, because they too are handicapped you know, and if those who have physical or mental handicaps are no longer called the disqualified, but are called the trainable, the needed, the usable, the wanted, and we set ourselves to the task of calling upon them to give of themselves, not only to their families and their communities, but to the whole nation.

The Committee on Disabled Veterans advises me that among the largest barriers to the employment of men who come back from service, having paid a higher price for it is, that seniority clauses, pension plans, and workmens' compensation practices make an employer hesitate about taking them on. Suppose you here today who are union officials checked into this, and let's see what we can do about it. Many already have. Let the practice become more widely accepted.

Suppose those here today who are builders or architects, or who are responsible for any new construction, were to check every blue-print to see whether there are ramps as well as steps, so that if someone who has a physical handicap wants to come to your apartment, he can get in. How terrible it is to block someone out because of prejudice. How terrible and cruel it is to block someone out because we didn't have the sense to make a door big enough or to build a structure that would permit that individual to come and share an hour of fellowship with our families.

Suppose every woman here who does her own shopping were to ask the local manager at the supermarket whether he hires the handicapped. You look him right in the eye as you are getting ready to pay that big grocery bill. I'll bet you that the hiring practice would change in a hurry.

Suppose everybody here who owns a share of stock were to drop a note to the corporate headquarters asking what the company's policies are about hiring handicapped people. Oh, wouldn't there be a meeting at once of the personnel director with the corporate executives?

Suppose that each and every one of you were to drop a note to every businessman that you know and say to him, "Are you making it possible for the needy youth of our land who are likewise handicapped, the needy and the deprived and the hard core unemployed who are handicapped through ignorance, illiteracy, and lack of skill, are you making it possible for them to be qualified and hired?" I tell you ladies and gentlemen, if you will do these things individually, your government won't have to ask anybody to do it. What America needs is a surge of conscience from the community, not preachments from on high. We need individual involvement and individual commitment. We need to ask of ourselves and of others, are we really interested in self-respect and human dignity? If we just ask a few of these questions, I submit to you that we are going to get some wonderful answers.

There is something else:

Over two million American workers suffer disabling injuries every year. Talk about tragic casualties and wounds in war! Two million workers suffer disabling injuries every year. This means that 500 have been hurt badly just while I've been talking, and a lot of you included maybe hurt a little differently. Many of these injuries are so serious that the person involved is going to be, from here on out, labeled a handicapped person. It is time for those of us who are concerned about employment of the handicapped to help out by cutting down the number of employed who become handicapped.

Suppose everyone in this room wrote his Senator and his Congressman asking him to support the Workers Safety Bill which President Johnson has sent to Congress and which it now has before it. You would be doing something for the handicapped that is very important because you would be cutting down on the flow of the handicapped in the Census.

Meetings such as this are not designed just for listening to speeches. They are here and designed for getting something done. If we only come to these gatherings to see each other and hear each other, then sometimes I wonder if our purpose is being fulfilled. My purpose in being here with you this morning is to get you to act. Someone once said that the purpose of knowledge is action. Action. Not knowledge for knowledge's sake. Not information for information's sake. Not dialogue for dialogue's sake, but action. I have outlined a whole series of little actions that can add up to some big changes.

One of my purposes this year is going to be to try to make it clearer how people can take a more effective part in making this country of ours what we want it to be. America needs a rebirth of individual participation in everything. Everything. The machine age has almost taught us that we are not needed. We are needed. This government needs you. Your community needs you. Every single project that has been designed and outlined needs you and we cannot just leave it to the paid representatives. There must be an individual concern and an individual action on that concern if this is going to be a better nation.

Harold Russell tells me we need more local Committees on Employment of the Handicapped. Well, let's get them organized. I add my urging to his.

Beyond this, my message to you today is that we can, not just as voters and taxpayers, but as individuals, do most for those we call handicapped by insisting that none of them be automatically disqualified, that their right is the same right that I have, the right that every American has under our Constitution. Their right is to participate, to have a chance to have a piece of the action, as the young folks put it. For this and nothing else and nothing less, is what living means, to participate.

Now I have the privilege of presenting the President's trophy to a man who has already been beautifully and wonderfully described to you in terms of his life and his life's work. He is a very important man, as has been said from this podium. I consider it a rare honor to share in his friendship and to be from the same State. This morning I was deeply touched as I listened to Eric Sevareid pay his tribute to Max Rheinberger of Duluth, Minnesota. Max is not anybody's beneficiary. If ever there was a participating citizen, he exemplifies it. He participates enough for a legion of citizens. He is a full and a total participant in his society, who lives more for others than for himself. He lives several days in each day. He has reached out to others with compassion, but even more with a message of honest hope, and most of all with the means to prepare themselves for equal opportunity. He is an inspiration, and to anybody in America who

thinks this country cannot do what it wants to do, for anyone who is a timid soul, who has lost faith, who thinks that this country has lost its way or is sick, I'll tell you, just take a look at the man who is to receive the trophy today. If Max Rheinberger can do what he has done without complaint, with joy, with fulfillment of life, then don't tell me that the rest of the Americans who are more privileged in any ways, who have the blessings from God Almighty of physical fitness and of mental health, don't tell me that we can't do it. I say that there never was a time that we needed to honor a man such as Max Rheinberger, more than today, when some Americans and far too many of our neighbors in other parts of the world wonder if we have what it takes to be a great people. I think so.

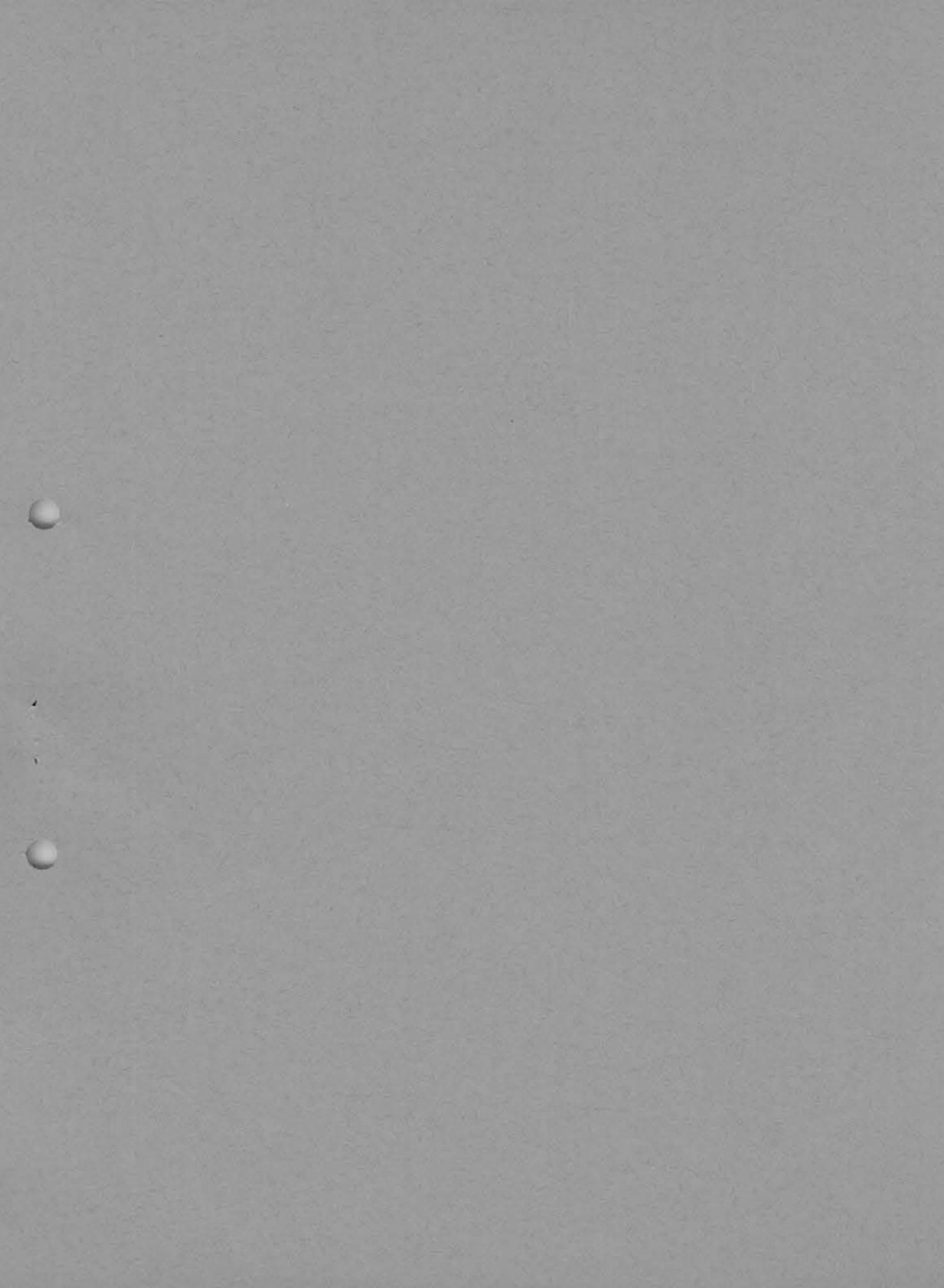
Max, we want to thank you, thank you for your life, for your work, for who you are, what you are and for what you have done. We thank you today in the President's name and we thank you on behalf of the nation, a proud nation, a nation that you have given so much to, and continue to add to its glory, to its wealth and its purpose. I salute you dear friend. Boy, what a guy!

CHAIRMAN RUSSELL: It's kind of hard to say, Thank you, Mr. Vice President, because we mean so much more than that. I think that you and others this morning have rendered the challenge to us and I think America and our people will rise to it. We would like to ask you to make officially Mr. Vice President, the presentation of this year's President's trophy. I will ask the new Director of the

Institute for the Crippled and Disabled, Dr. Salvatore DiMichael, to hand you this silver and gray trophy for presentation in your name and the name of President Johnson.

VICE PRESIDENT HUMPHREY: It reads as follows: "The President's Trophy - 1967 - Awarded Max C. Rheinberger For the Most Outstanding Contribution in the Field of the Employment of the Handicapped." It's signed by Lyndon B. Johnson, President of the United States. This is a high honor to a good man.

--ooOoo--



ORIGINAL

[May 2]

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

- - -

May 3, 1968

**WARD & PAUL**  
OFFICIAL REPORTERS  
25 K STREET, N. E.  
Washington, D. C. 20002

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- - -

May 3, 1968

- - -

1 (Applause.)

2 VICE PRESIDENT HUMPHREY: Thank you very much. Thank  
3 you. Thank you, Secretary Wirtz. And I thank you, my good  
4 friend, Willard Wirtz, and my special thanks to Harold Russell,  
5 a long time friend. Harold, you will be pleased to note I hope,  
6 at least, that as you were standing here at the podium that  
7 Willard Wirtz and Hubert Humphrey were saying, "What a fellow.  
8 What a wonderful man this fellow, Harold Russell." And we mean  
9 it. You are just great.

10 (Applause.)

11 And how singularly honored this audience is to have  
12 heard from Eric Sevareid, one of our most distinguished commen-  
13 tators and scholars, but, above all, a wonderful man and a fine  
14 gentleman. And to share in his friendship is indeed a precious  
15 gift. I have had that gift and I surely honor it and treasure  
16 it.

17 And, it is good to see Max Reinburger here and his  
18 wife. It is good to be present when a really distinguished  
19 Minnesotan is being honored.

20 (Laughter, applause.)

21 And to all of the honored guests that are here this  
22 morning may I, in the spirit of this very unusual and inspiring  
23 occasion, just wish you well and greet you.

24 I thank Willard for telling you why we were delayed.  
25 I didn't want to leave until Mrs. Humphrey was out of the

1 operating room, but I frankly had to come just a little before  
2 she returned to her room. But all is well anyway. I knew it  
3 would be well with "mom." She is the best member of the family  
4 and things generally work out well for her.

5 (Applause.)

6 Well, those of you that are repeaters at this confer-  
7 ence have heard me so many times. I bet I know what you are  
8 saying now -- "What's he going to say this time?"

9 (Laughter.)

10 Well, I am not quite sure. But I have a few thoughts  
11 here that I would like to share with you. The first thought is  
12 you know how much I enjoy coming to these annual meetings. I  
13 consider this one of the most important gatherings in Washington.  
14 This is the meeting of people, as Eric Sevareid said, who  
15 exemplified courage and faith and also exemplify achievement.

16 I always get a lift out of coming here. I really  
17 know what it means to be healed when I see people who have  
18 done what some of our friends in this audience have been able  
19 to accomplish. And you feel very inadequate, too, when you  
20 remember the times that you have griped and grouched around  
21 about some little thing that may have troubled you when you see  
22 someone like our "Man of the Year," Max here, you just ought to  
23 be ashamed of yourself for ever having complained at all.

24 I guess it is a time for confession. And if I can  
25 gain a little extra strength this morning by doing so, then I

1 have done it.

2 Now, this is one Vice Presidential function that I  
3 discharge not from a sense of duty alone, but from a strong  
4 personal desire. And I look forward, incidentally, to exer-  
5 cising it next year on a slightly different basis possibly.

6 (Laughter, applause.)

7 Now, so that you won't think I am partisan or even  
8 political -- (Laughter) -- may I say on a slightly different  
9 basis, either public or private.

10 (Laughter.)

11 I am glad I didn't hear too much applause on that  
12 private part. Thank you.

13 (Laughter.)

14 I guess I think there is no more intensely human in-  
15 terest than the one that this committee serves. I think, too,  
16 that there is no other area in which we are making faster  
17 progress towards realizing man's essential humanity to man, for  
18 a basic powerful change is going on today in the whole idea of  
19 what being handicapped means. Oh, there are so many changes  
20 taking place today. Is it any wonder that we have a little  
21 difficulty adjusting ourselves to them.

22 You know, being handicapped used to mean being dis-  
23 qualified, ruled out. Today, almost suddenly, in most people's  
24 thinking it has come to mean taking part in things, participation,  
25 even if on a little different basis. And there is all the

1 difference in the world here, almost the difference for the  
2 handicapped person between being and not being. For the dif-  
3 ference is between having a right to be helped and having the  
4 right and the opportunity to contribute, to give as well as to  
5 get, which is a lot of what self-respect means, and having  
6 meaning as an individual instead of having to wonder what sense  
7 life really makes.

8           Being disqualified was a retarded child's being denied  
9 an education if that child couldn't keep up with an educational  
10 system designed to prepare normal youngsters in twelve years to  
11 go to college.

12           And I guess this audience knows how I feel about this  
13 matter. And to every educator here and every taxpayer let me  
14 say that every one of God's children, every one is entitled to  
15 a full measure of community cooperation. Every one is entitled  
16 to an opportunity, retarded or not retarded. And let our school  
17 systems understand that. In fact, maybe a little more ought to  
18 be done.

19           (Applause.)

20           A little more to be done for those who can least help  
21 themselves.

22           Disqualified is being denied employment if you had  
23 multiple sclerosis or cerebral palsy or had ever been in a  
24 mental hospital. It was an epileptic being denied a driver's  
25 license even though his seizures were now controlled. The

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1 meanest, the most thoughtless disqualification was a man or a  
2 woman in a wheel chair being denied entrance to a building or  
3 even a bathroom because it had steps or because the door was  
4 too narrow.

5 Disqualification was a handicapped person being de-  
6 nied the right to be useful because our whole system of mass  
7 transportation depended on being able to climb up the stairs.  
8 The idea of disqualification should be and I think is dead. It  
9 isn't the way that we ought to think and it isn't the way we  
10 think any more.

11 A lot of the architectural barriers, for example,  
12 ruins of an old idea still remain, I know. A brilliant,  
13 attractive 18-year-old boy who came to Washington with his  
14 family for Easter vacation this year didn't get up to the  
15 Lincoln Memorial or as close as he wanted to John Kennedy's  
16 Grave because he must live on a litter and it couldn't be  
17 wheeled up the stairs.

18 Eighty per cent of those who look for employment after  
19 they leave a mental hospital fully cured feel they have to leave  
20 off their records that fact if they want to get a good job.  
21 Yet, in a very real sense, with all of this, the thinking about  
22 the physically and mentally handicapped people today is that  
23 their right is not to be disqualified and then cared for but,  
24 rather, to participate to as full an extent as their capacity  
25 permits or as anybody else.

WARD & PAUL

25 K Street, N.E., Washington, D.C. 20002

1           The phrase, for example, "sheltered workshops" kind  
2 of worries me on occasion. Now, that isn't the idea, the prac-  
3 tice of handicapped people gathering there every day to do  
4 what is sometimes dull and monotonous work at pay rates fixed  
5 by what it would cost machines to do that work, I think comes  
6 out of another century.

7           Your women's committee, Project Earning Power, is a  
8 great step away from that ugly human anachronism. And, I am  
9 happy to say, that one of the prime movers in the women's  
10 committee Project Earning Power is the very charming and  
11 talented and gifted wife of Willard Wirtz, Jane Wirtz. She is  
12 a wonderful lady.

13           (Applause.)

14           But a great deal more needs to be done. I ask a few  
15 questions of this audience today. Is it right to grant exemp-  
16 tions to the minimum wage law so that those who are employed  
17 in sheltered workshops labor at the meanest work at less than  
18 statutory wage? Don't they need the minimum wage more than most  
19 people?

20           Wouldn't it be better to subsidize those workshops,  
21 if necessary, so that a fair day's work there will result in a  
22 fair day's pay, like every place else?

23           (Applause.)

24           Now, this seems to make sense to me, at least, to the  
25 extent of government reimbursement for training costs for those

1 men and women in these workshops who have the capacity to do  
2 so much more than they are doing. The terms of the President's  
3 jobs program, our National Alliance of Businessmen, those  
4 terms are sufficiently broad to permit the reimbursement of  
5 private employers for the special on-the-job training costs of  
6 those who are disadvantaged because of their twisted limbs as  
7 well as those who have been discriminated against because of  
8 their race.

9           You see, what I am telling you is we have the machin-  
10 ery to do this job, we have the law; we just have to have the  
11 idea. And just as we now are willing to have the government  
12 cooperate with private industry to train and hire and place  
13 what are called the hard-core unemployed in private industry  
14 and done by private industry, I submit that we ought to have  
15 the same feeling and the same action and the same policy, and  
16 we do have, of those specialized training needs of disadvantaged  
17 because of a handicap and the industrialist or the company can  
18 be repaid for those costs so that a person can have meaningful  
19 work.

20           Now, I urge the further consideration of these possi-  
21 bilities by the responsible officers in our government. And  
22 one of those, of course, who is more than willing is the  
23 Secretary of Labor, of the Department of Labor, and the  
24 Secretary of the Department of Health, Education and Welfare.

25           And I also urge these possibilities of training on

1 the job by the National Alliance of Businessmen. And, if  
2 necessary, and we need new legislation then by the Congress. I  
3 even urge more strongly the recognition by people generally of  
4 all the ways in which we can implement the new realization  
5 that disqualification of those who are handicapped is wrong,  
6 morally wrong, socially wrong, economically wrong, and that  
7 they are entitled to their right to take part in this country  
8 to the utmost of their capacity.

9 Now, those of us who have been close to the fact of  
10 handicapped in ourselves or in our families know how much  
11 tenderness can mean but how empty and self-serving sympathy is,  
12 that it can sting sometimes more than it softens, weaken more  
13 than it strengthens.

14 Shake hands with Harold Russell. Match your smile  
15 with his and feel the smallness of being solicitous drain right  
16 out of you.

17 Listen to Senator Dan Inouye's story of his gratitude  
18 to the nurse who made him light his own match and his own  
19 cigarette when he awakened in a battlefield hospital bed to  
20 find that he had only one arm.

21 A lot of things can be done by doing what comes  
22 naturally, but there is a lot more to do.

23 Suppose every businessman here today checked his  
24 hiring practices to see whether the forms which you have to fill  
25 out if you want a job, to see whether those forms ask about

1 previous mental treatment; and, if they do, what the reaction  
2 is to an affirmative answer.

3           Suppose, then, that all job descriptions were checked  
4 to see whether there are less skilled elements in three or four  
5 jobs that could be combined into one that someone in a wheel  
6 chair could perform.

7           In other words, suppose we became a little ingenious  
8 and used our knowledge, our brain, our imagination to find ways  
9 and means of using every bit of human capacity that we have in  
10 this country. Just think what this would add to America.  
11 Think of what it would add to our wealth. But, oh, how more  
12 important it is to think of what it would add to the genuine  
13 happiness of this Nation if people who are presently disabled  
14 because of no skill were trained and received skills because  
15 they, too, are handicapped, you know. And if those who have  
16 physical or mental handicaps are no longer called the disqual-  
17 ified but are called the trainable, the needed, the usable,  
18 the wanted, and we set ourselves to the task of calling upon  
19 them to give of themselves not only to their family and their  
20 community but to the whole Nation.

21           The Committee on Disabled Veterans advises me that  
22 among the largest barriers to the employment of men who come  
23 back from service, having paid a higher price for it, is that  
24 seniority clauses, pension plans, and workmen's compensation  
25 practices make an employer hesitate about taking them on.

1           Suppose you here today who are union officials checked  
2 into this and let's see what we can do about it. Many already  
3 have. Let the practice become more widely accepted.

4           Suppose those here today who are builders or archi-  
5 tects or who are responsible for any new construction were to  
6 check every blueprint to see whether there are ramps as well  
7 as steps so that if someone who has a physical handicap wants  
8 to come to your apartment he can get in. How terrible it is to  
9 block someone out because of prejudice. How terrible and cruel  
10 it is to block someone out because we didn't have the sense to  
11 make a door big enough or to build a structure that would per-  
12 mit that individual to come and share an hour of fellowship  
13 with our families.

14           Suppose every woman here who does her own shopping  
15 were to ask the local manager at the supermarket whether he  
16 hires the handicapped, and you look him right in the eye as  
17 you are getting ready to pay that big grocery bill. I would  
18 bet you that the hiring practice would change in a hurry.

19           (Laughter, applause.)

20           Suppose everyone here who owns a share of stock were  
21 to drop a note to the corporate headquarters asking what the  
22 company's policies are about hiring handicapped people. Oh,  
23 wouldn't there be a meeting at once of the personnel director  
24 with the corporate executives. Oh, yes.

25           And suppose that each and every one of you were to

1 drop a note to every businessman that you know and say to him  
2 are you making it possible for the needy youth of our land  
3 who are likewise handicapped, the needy and the deprived and  
4 the hard-core unemployed who are handicapped through ignorance  
5 and illiteracy and lack of skill, are you making it possible  
6 for them to be qualified and hired?

7 I tell you, ladies and gentlemen, if we will do these  
8 things individually your government won't have to ask anybody  
9 to do it. What America needs is a surge of conscience from  
10 the community, not preachment from on high. We need individual  
11 involvement and individual commitment. We need to ask of our-  
12 selves and of others: Are we really interested in self-respect  
13 and human dignity?

14 (Applause.)

15 If we just ask a few of these questions, I submit to  
16 you, we are going to get some wonderful answers.

17 Now, there is something else. Over two million  
18 American workers suffer disabling injuries every year. Think  
19 of it. We talk about casualties in war. Tragic casualties,  
20 wounds -- two million workers suffer disabling injuries every  
21 year. This mean that 500 have been hurt badly just while I  
22 have been talking. And a lot of you maybe included hurt a  
23 little differently.

24 (Laughter.)

25 Now, many of these injuries are so serious that the

1 person involved is going to be from here-on out labeled a  
2 handicapped person. It is time for those of us who are con-  
3 cerned about employment of the handicapped to help out by cut-  
4 ting down the number of the employed who become handicapped.  
5 So suppose that everyone in this room wrote his Senator and  
6 his Congressman asking him to support the workers' safety bill  
7 which President Johnson has sent the Congress and which it now  
8 has before it. You will be doing something for the handicapped  
9 that is very important because you would be cutting down on  
10 the flow of the handicapped in the census.

11 Meetings such as this are not designed just for  
12 listening to speeches; they are here and designed for getting  
13 something done. If we only come to these gatherings to see  
14 each other and hear each other, then sometimes I wonder if our  
15 purpose is being fulfilled.

16 My purpose in being here with you this morning is to  
17 get you to act. Someone once said that the purpose of knowledge  
18 is action -- action, not knowledge for knowledge's sake, not  
19 information for information's sake, not dialogue for dialogue's  
20 sake, but action. And I have outlined a whole series of  
21 little actions that can add up to some big changes.

22 One of my purposes this year is going to be to try  
23 to make it clear how people can take a more effective part in  
24 making this country of ours what we want it to be. America  
25 needs a rebirth of individual participation in everything --

1 everything.

2           The machine age has almost taught us that we are not  
3 needed. Well, we are needed. This government needs you.  
4 Your community needs you. Every single project that has been  
5 designed and outlined needs you. And we can't leave it just  
6 to the paid representatives. There must be an individual con-  
7 cern and an individual action on that concern if this is going  
8 to be a better nation.

9           Harold Russell tells me we need more local committees  
10 on employment of the handicapped. Well, let's get them organ-  
11 ized. I add my urging to his. Beyond this my message to you  
12 today is that we can, not just as voters and taxpayers but  
13 again as individuals, do most for those we call handicapped by  
14 insisting that none of them be automatically disqualified,  
15 that their right is the same right that I have, the right that  
16 every American has under our Constitution. Their right is to  
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21 President's Trophy to a man who has already been beautifully  
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23 life's work. He is a very important man, as has been said  
24 from this podium. I consider it a rare honor to share in his  
25 friendship and to be from the same State.

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2 Eric Sevareid pay his tribute to Max Reinburger of Duluth,  
3 Minnesota. Max is not anybody's beneficiary. If ever there  
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9 but even more, with a message of honest hope and, most of all,  
10 with the means to prepare themselves for equal opportunity.

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12 that thinks that this country can't do what it wants to do, for  
13 anyone that is a timid soul, that has lost faith, that thinks  
14 this country has lost its way or is sick, I will tell you, just  
15 take a look at the man that is to receive the trophy today.

16           If Max Reinburger can do what he has done without  
17 complaint, with joy, with fulfillment of life, then don't tell  
18 me that the rest of Americans who are more privileged in many  
19 ways, who have had the blessing from God Almighty of physical  
20 fitness and of mental health, don't tell me that we can't do  
21 it. And I say that there never was a time that we needed to  
22 honor a man such as Max Reinburger more than today when some  
23 Americans and far too many of our neighbors in other parts of  
24 the world wonder if we have what it takes to be a great people.  
25 I think so.

1 (Applause.)

2 And, Max, we want to thank you, thank you for your  
3 life, for your work, for who you are, what you are and what  
4 you have done. And we thank you today in the President's name  
5 and we thank you on behalf of a Nation, a proud Nation, a  
6 Nation that you have given so much to and continue to add to  
7 its glory and to its wealth and its purpose. I salute you,  
8 dear friend. Boy, what a guy.

9 (Applause.)

10 MR. It is kind of hard to say thank you,  
11 Mr. Vice President, because we need so much more than that. I  
12 think that you and others this morning have rendered a challenge  
13 to it and I think that America, and I know our people will  
14 rise to it.

15 Now we would like you to ask you to make officially,  
16 Mr. Vice President, the presentation of this year's President's  
17 Trophy. I might remind everybody that this trophy was made by  
18 handicapped students at the Institute for the Rehabilitation of  
19 the Disabled in New York City, and I will ask its new Director,  
20 Dr. Salvatore DeMichael, to hand you the silver engraved  
21 trophy for official presentation in your name and in the name  
22 of President Johnson.

23 (Applause.)

24 VICE PRESIDENT HUMPHREY: May I just read this. It  
25 reads as follows: The President's Trophy, 1967, Awarded: Max

1 C. Reinburger, Jr., for the most outstanding contribution in  
2 the field of employment of the handicapped. It is signed by  
3 Lyndon B. Johnson, President of the United States. This is a  
4 high honor to a good man.

5 (Applause.)

6 MR. REINBURGER: Thank you, Mr. Vice President, and  
7 thank you, Mr. Sevareid, for the wonderful tributes paid me  
8 here today. And thanks to the President's Committee for this  
9 whole thing. It is undoubtedly the proudest and wonderful  
10 moment of my life. I will share it forever. I will accept  
11 this award on behalf of all those who have done so much and  
12 made what I have done possible -- my wonderful, wonderful wife,  
13 Mary Ann, with whom anything is possible.

14 (Applause.)

15 The forward-looking vocational rehabilitation program  
16 in Minnesota, and especially Gus Gurky and John Reiss who gave  
17 me my start, I am accepting this award on behalf of each and  
18 every one of you in this great room. You people have put to-  
19 gether the hard work, dedicated service and creative program-  
20 ming that has created an attitude in our Nation where every  
21 American is given the opportunity to become a productive,  
22 creative member of society and that there exists in this  
23 country now an ever-increasing awareness that ability counts.

24 I accept this award as the trustee for the hundreds  
25 of thousands of seriously disabled Americans whose creative

1 lives in every state and city of our Nation are witness to  
2 their great ability, potential and contributions. This example  
3 is truly the most effective means we have of promoting fuller  
4 understanding of the potential and the capability of the dis-  
5 abled.

6 I think I will say a word to the other handicapped  
7 in this room. I propose today that an organization be estab-  
8 lished under the auspices of the President's Committee to  
9 harness the tremendous ability of the myriad of successful  
10 employed contributing handicapped Americans. Such an organi-  
11 zation could operate as a subcommittee or whatever you might  
12 call it to state and local committees all over the land. It  
13 could be a valuable adjunct, I believe, to promoting the  
14 programs of rehabilitation and the employment of the handi-  
15 capped.

16 An immense pool of hundreds of thousands of handi-  
17 capped Americans are waiting to be of service in our joint  
18 effort in a unique way that could be done by no other group.

19 (Applause.)

20 - - -

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THE PRESIDENT'S COMMITTEE ON EMPLOYMENT OF THE HANDICAPPED  
ANNUAL MEETING

Washington Hilton Hotel  
May 2, 1968

*first draft  
but  
save it*

REMARKS BY VICE PRESIDENT HUMPHREY

In the terrible events in our cities during the past month, one significant event seems to have slipped by without our notice.

A new kind of placard blossomed forth in city after city. It didn't say "Black Power" or any other kind of power. It didn't say "Freedom Now." It said very simply: "I Am A Man." "I Am A Man."

That sign is eloquent in its simplicity. It has special meaning not only for the poor, not only for the minorities, but for the handicapped as well.

Do you know what it means to proclaim "I Am A Man" or "I Am A Woman?"

It is your own personal declaration of independence and of equality. You proclaim you are just as good as all the other men and all the other women on this earth.

It means you no longer are content to be a second class man or a second class woman. You no longer are content to lead a second class life, live in a second class house, send your children to second class schools, eat second class food, wear second class clothes, hold a second class job if you hold any job at all.

Now, I obviously am not condoning violence or arson or looting or riots or any of the devastating antisocial acts that occurred last month. Our cities rightfully took quick and vigorous action to restore law and order.

But we have to realize that behind some of those actions was more than a drive for sheer trouble-making. Some of it represents a deep and inarticulate dissatisfaction with second class citizenship.

"I Am A Man" means "Stop the world; I want to get on."

The past month's troubles -- and the striving for a better life that they somehow represent -- should remind us of something that should have been perfectly clear to us these past 200 years. There must be no second class citizenship in America for anyone. Not for anyone.

By "anyone" I mean persons of all races, all colors, all creeds, all religions, all stations in life. And I mean the handicapped, too.

Look around you. Can we honestly say all the handicapped have achieved first class citizenship in America?

When an epileptic cannot get a driver's license in certain States, even though his seizures are controlled, he is a second class citizen.

When an ex-mental patient has to hide the fact he had been in a mental hospital -- as do eighty percent of all those seeking jobs -- he is a second class citizen.

When a mentally retarded person cannot hope to prepare for a job because there are not enough training facilities to accommodate him, he is a second class citizen.

When a person with multiple sclerosis or cerebral palsy is denied a job by a company policy that screens out all but the so-called physically perfect, he is a second class citizen.

When a man in a wheelchair cannot get into a public building because of architectural barriers that stand in his way, he is a second class citizen. I am glad to note that later this morning we shall honor a man for his part in eliminating some of those restrictive barriers. More about him later.

When a man who is ready to work can't get to and from his home by public transportation, then he has a transportation barrier and is a second class citizen.

Well, what are we going to do about it? I mean particularly those of us here this morning; those with the competence and the capacity to act; those whose actions can help change the world.

I believe that each of us must carry out his own individual "outreach" program. Each of us must reach out to touch his handicapped neighbor -- to do something positive and tangible to help him.

The President's Manpower Report tells us that handicapping conditions among the disadvantaged are nearly three times greater than among the rest of the population. These people -- with the double drawback of poverty and disability -- desperately need our outstretched hands.

The same report shows that an alarmingly large number of handicapped people are no longer in the labor force, no longer looking for work. Presumably many have grown so discouraged by the word "no" that they have just about given up. They need our outstretched hands.

Many of the handicapped have disabilities that are stigmatized by society for no logical reason -- epilepsy, mental illness, mental retardation, cerebral palsy, so many more. They need our outstretched hands. And society itself needs our outstretched hands, to help melt away the stigma that clouds its vision.

We all agree; certainly, the handicapped are entitled to the same equal opportunity that is the birthright of all citizens. Our "outreach" efforts are needed just to bring the handicapped up to the point where they can avail themselves of the blessings of equal opportunity.

It isn't enough to point to equality high on a pedestal and say, "There it is; go get it." Our "outreach" efforts can take equality off the pedestal and put it within reach of those who would cherish it so dearly, the handicapped.

What can we do? What kinds of personal "outreach" programs can we engage in? We can do what comes naturally to us; we can do in accord with our talents.

Are you an organizer at heart? You belong on a local Committee on Employment of the Handicapped, of which, Harold Russell tells me, there aren't nearly enough.

Are you a businessman? Look at your own hiring practices. Ask your businessman friends to look at theirs.

Are you in the labor movement? You can do so much to promote acceptance of the handicapped by fellow-workers.

Are you a builder or an architect? Are you sure the handicapped can get into all the buildings you construct?

Are you a housewife? What do you know of the hiring practices of the many firms you deal with every day -- supermarkets, department stores, offices. Ask them: Do they hire the handicapped? If not, why not?

Are you a professional person or community leader? You have a special responsibility to speak up for the handicapped, because your words are specially heeded.

Are you a social worker, a rehabilitation or employment service professional? You must keep alert to the many new programs available for serving people and work even harder to make sure that cooperation between agencies becomes a reality.

Are you the parent, brother, sister or friend of some handicapped person? Help us communicate with them the fact that there is a place for them in our society, that they are wanted and needed, if only they will try hard.

Are you an American? Then do something. Do anything. Don't just sit it out. Do something between the time of this Annual Meeting and the next Annual Meeting. When you meet here in 1969, what will YOU be able to say YOU have done?

My friend Max Rheinberger has lived by these precepts. He has lived less for himself than for others. He has engaged in his own individual "outreach" program in behalf of the handicapped and others in need. He has helped train the handicapped, to prepare them for equal opportunity. He has worked hard in his community to help build a better life for all who needed an outstretched hand.

How many of us have done one-tenth of the things that Max Rheinberger has done? And Max Rheinberger is almost completely paralyzed.

Reach out your hands. Dedicate yourself to action -- some kind of action -- toward eliminating the second class citizenship of so many of the handicapped.

May the day soon come when there will be no second class citizens in America, when the dream of our founding fathers will at last come true, when every last citizen of our land can proclaim with pride: "I am a man." "I am a woman." "I am a person."

Dr Collins  
Art Edgerton

Paul Strachan  
5 Essay contest winners

COMMENTS BY  
VICE PRESIDENT HUBERT H. HUMPHREY  
AT  
PRESIDENT'S COMMITTEE ON THE HANDICAPPED  
THURSDAY MORNING, APRIL 27, 1967

Spring-time in our nation's Capital brings

Cherry Blossoms, the baseball season and an even more  
refreshing event -- your Annual Meeting of the Presi-  
dent's Committee on the Handicapped.

What a "vitamin tonic" your meeting is --  
not just to a former pharmacist, but to everyone  
privileged to see the zest of champions for human  
dignity at work.

It is a joy to visit with you again --  
for this third year in a row. I bring you the  
renewed personal greetings of President Johnson.

You are the leaders of his Committee, the President's  
Committee.

You represent as courageous and far-visioned  
a group of men and women as will assemble at any time  
in our nation's Capital. You are the voice, the con-  
science, the strong "right arm" of your President in  
the good fight for economic justice for the disabled.

As individuals, <sup>many of</sup> you may need a cane or  
crutch or electronic aid, a brace or wheel-chair,  
but you have what life really requires: You have  
heart and spirit and will. You do move -- not just  
yourselves -- but the whole nation forward -- forward  
over obstacles of misunderstanding and indifference.

You help the disabled move forward through factory  
gates that for too long have been half-closed, forward  
to better white collar and blue collar jobs, yes,  
forward to buildings and homes designed for the  
handicapped.

As I look around this room today, I see  
so many living examples of triumphant human spirit,  
of the victory of ability over disability.

↳ There is so much in my heart that I would  
like to say about each of your leaders, about Chair-  
man Harold Russell, about Colonel Bill McCahill,  
Bernie Posner, and so many others.

↳ I want to convey my special congratulations  
to Art Edgerton. What an inspiration Art is as the  
winner of the "Handicapped Man of the Year" Award!

↳ Edgerton  
Art symbolizes not only those disabled Americans who  
deservedly win public acclaim, but the vast number  
of other disabled. ↳ They are relatively unknown,  
but each day, they win quiet victories over impairment.

The presence of my old and dear friend,  
a great pioneer, Paul Strachan, is a vivid reminder  
of how this entire program got started -- in Employ  
the Handicapped Week and in the President's Committee  
on the Handicapped. Paul never would quite "hear"  
a "No" answer when a "Yes" was crucial to an advance  
for the disabled.

Loss of hearing, loss of sight, loss of arms  
or limbs, paralysis, cerebral palsy, mental handicaps,  
convulsive disorders -- this is not a catalog of  
defeat, my friends; it is a cavalcade of victories  
of the spirit over the flesh, of cowage ~~spunk~~ over resignation.

I salute you. I pledge your Government's  
continued all-out effort for this cause.

We have come a long way. We are approaching the long-sought goal, next year, of 200,000 Americans to be vocationally rehabilitated in a 12-month period. That is still not enough, not nearly enough; the human backlog -- awaiting training and re-training -- is still enormous, but we are at least keeping up our pace.

In this year's budget, I am glad to say, the President has proposed \$331 million for Federal matching grants to the States; it was only \$23 million in 1955 and \$171 million in the 1966 fiscal year.

Our State Governors and legislators deserve credit for their increased investment in matching the Federal grants.

But what better investment could they or we make than in increased earning power, increased tax-paying power, dignity power for the disabled?

Before me, I see another form of power -- the "youth power" of the winners of the high school essay context -- "Ability Counts." I congratulate these fine young men and women.

∟ The well-being of youth itself is very much on our minds and in our hearts.

At this very time, I am engaged in an urgent new program which will be of particular help to the nation's young -- including, hopefully, the physically and mentally handicapped. By Executive Order, President Johnson has established a new President's Council on Youth Opportunity, of which I am privileged to be Chairman. Its goal is to help expand job as well as recreational opportunities for the young, especially during the hot summer months ahead.

In 1965, and again in 1966, with the help of private industry, we helped generate 1 million extra jobs for needy teenagers. We are going to far surpass that mark this year.

It is my hope that during the coming summer months, disadvantaged youngsters who have handicaps will be given special opportunity.

Simultaneously, we expect to expand summer camp, sports, educational, cultural and other programs, for millions of well and handicapped youngsters in Inner Cities, in ghetto areas, in sweltering tenements.

You who have been bed-ridden, you who have lived so many years in wheel chairs -- you know what it is to be confined -- physically or mentally -- without suitable outlets for energy or interest.

This is what I ask every Governor, every Mayor, every civic organization to help provide -- suitable outlets for the energies and interests of restless young people during the hot, otherwise idle and frustrated months ahead.

One of the President's mandates is for "programs designed to identify, diagnose and treat the illnesses and handicapping conditions of youth who participate in these summer programs."

↳ We do need "early (medical) warning systems" to detect disability.

↳ No one here need be reminded that much of the anguish of a disability might be avoided if only illness and potential disability could be spotted in time and corrective action taken.

↳ Our goal, however, is to open health and other opportunities for every age bracket and not just for the summer months -- for the entire year.

↳ Freedom is our goal -- freedom from the tyranny of a birth or later defect, freedom from the insecurity of joblessness or underemployment, freedom from discrimination.

There is just one so-called "National Liberation Front" which all Americans can rightly support. I refer to a voluntary, truly democratic alliance in our country to liberate human beings from the bondage of hopelessness, of despair, of bleak, barren lives.

Some people offer cure-alls; "there ought to be a law," they say; or "we ought to repeal some laws."

↳ But we have good laws for the handicapped; our job is to fulfill them and make sure they are not crippled or starved by forces of reaction.

↳ Make no mistake; backward-looking forces are definitely at work; they may act under many high-sounding appeals; but their target is the same -- to undermine the War Against Poverty, the peaceful effort for human rights, to tear up the foundations of equal education, equal housing, equal jobs for all

Let us remember --

Equality must mean equality for all -- no exceptions, no "yes, buts", no asterisked footnotes, imposing limits.

The sacred documents -- the charters -- of this land do not promise justice and equality just for the physically and mentally blessed, or for geniuses, or for the rich, the good-looking, the clean-cut, the city dweller, the Caucasian -- but for all God's children, of every race, creed, color, of every circumstance of birth, of every level of I.Q.

Not long ago, it was my pleasure to see some of the remarkable handiwork of a group of the handicapped, in this instance, the mentally retarded. Our good friend, Hank Viscardi, one of the most remarkable leaders in this entire program -- showed members of the President's Committee on Mental

Retardation some perfectly beautiful glass engraved plates his workers had made. Mrs. Humphrey is a member of the President's Committee and is particularly interested in opening vocational opportunities for the retarded. Seeing that impressive glassware served as another reminder of what so many individuals can do -- if given the chance, if given training.

↳ What does it really take? It takes precisely what this audience represents:

-- volunteer-power;

-- work-power.

↳ You are citizen-volunteers -- of the President's Committee, of Governors' Committees, of local committees in hundreds of towns. ↳ You are the partners of professionals -- of physicians and rehabilitation specialists, of placement experts. And you are doers -- speakers -- petitioners -- catalysts.

If some volunteers could bring about the amazing progress you have already achieved, just think what two times and three times your number could do -- can do -- should do -- in the bright years ahead.

So, I ask: Whom and how many have you recruited lately? Have you inventoried your lists of volunteers? Have you shelved, or, better still, brought to life any "deadwood" who do not actually contribute to this cause? Have you reached out to every segment of opinion moulders in your community? Have you enlisted the talent, the drive, the zest of youth?

And what about your constituency? Have you sought jobs for everyone -- not just for the "walking wounded" -- but for the elderly victim of degenerative disease, for the hidden away, the restored mind; for the totally rejected, the despised --

the ex-alcoholic, the disabled ex-convict, the disfigured?

Every life is worth saving -- salvaging.

We are an affluent country, enjoying full employment and unprecedented prosperity; but we are not so rich that we can be prodigal with any human resources. Our handicapped must be enabled to participate fully in every phase of society. We simply cannot afford to be deprived of their talents and skills. We cannot afford the economic loss of their wasted ability.

And we cannot be faithful to our own inner voice, to our religion, to our ethics by being untrue to those who have suffered some physical or mental misfortune.

I believe in people helping people -- now.

Every time a new trainee learns a skill in a sheltered workshop, every time an epileptic punches a time-clock in a good job; every time a blind person nimbly assembles a delicate instrument, every time a paraplegic wheels up a ramp to an assembly line or desk; every time an amputee -- a deaf person -- a mute -- enjoys the thrill of opening a new pay envelope, he or she is a living testimonial to our enlightenment and our justice and our plain good sense.

We need millions more of such "living monuments" -- human beings whose enhanced skills and happier lives attest to their own and to society's faith.

This is my message today -- a message of pride in the past, of salute to the present and commitment to an ever brighter future for the handicapped.

Let all year be springtime, hope-time,  
fulfillment-time for the handicapped.

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