

Transcript of Vice-President Hubert H. Humphrey's Speech

Buffalo, Minnesota; December 28, 1968

Thank you very much, Senator Jude, my good friend Vic; Mayor Stubstad, the chairman of our county board Mr. Barthel, chairman of this festive occasion, Mr. Brock, Representative Gruys, all of the distinguished folks that are here and out in the audience. I said to Mrs. Humphrey "Don't worry, dear, I'll make it short." She looked up at me and said "I'm sorry". She was coughing and she had a cold. I had the flu about 10 days ago and most everybody else has had it. Sort of gives us a common bond of fellowship and friendship these days. I didn't know we would have to resort to that but at least it does give us something to feel in common. I want to thank Mr. Olson for that small bird, that he presented to me, a 50 pound turkey. The first thing that Mrs. Humphrey said, (and I saw four appliance dealers raise their hands out there) "I'll have to get a new oven, Daddy." I noticed there are signs out around already, so that I suppose we will be doing business. But I've been a friend of the Turkey Growers Association out here in Minnesota and am very proud of the fact that we are the number 1 turkey state. I think we are the # 1 state in the Union in more areas than growing turkeys. So, Earl, I want to thank you very much. I was so pleased at the presentation that was made to Mrs. Humphrey by the Jaycees and the Mrs. Jaycees. I want to thank that fine organization. I've been a member of the Jaycees for many years. I'm a senior member now- a senator member as they call them. I've worked very closely with this wonderful organization of young men and I've gotten to know many of their young ladies and they're a wonderful group. I want to say that I intend to get better acquainted as I'm around here. And to the League of Women Voters, this is a special honor to be included as an associate member of the League of Women Voters. Muriel, I'll be attending a number of their meetings. Thought I oughta tell Mrs. Gensky that she'll have me around to bother her and Mrs. Robertson. That organization has done so much for our country and has been so helpful here in Minnesota. I'm not sure that Representative Gruys and Senator Vic Jude are always in agreement with all that the League asks them to do, but fellows, you won't go wrong if you follow their advice. Times I've made mistakes is when I didn't follow their advice. Now there are lots of things that are in my heart today. This is a cold and chilly day in atmosphere, that is in climate, but its' very warm in spirit. I guess the warmth of the spirit is able to overcome some of these climatic and atmospheric conditions, that we may have to suffer through for a moment here. But I want you all to know how grateful Mrs. Humphrey and I are -today as we are everyday- for the privilege of living in this community, calling it our home here in Wright County and of having the opportunity to know you. When Darrell Wolff got up here, I wasn't sure just what he was going to do. I was so appreciative as he read that resolution. I thought it was a summons for awhile. But we've gotten to know Darrell and Leo and others here. We feel that we are so fortunate to have fine public servants that represent us as they do and serve all of us the way they do. We have been in our Courts and our County Seat town from time to time but not nearly as often as we think we should be. we will be home much more in the days ahead that we have been in the past years; and we'll be around to see you as just neighbors and friends and customers and folks that just like to visit. We were out to Scoop Mills' home here and I had a wonderful time out there. Looked over his gun rack and if he gets as many birds as he has guns, the hunting ought to be good around here. I plan on doing a little of that. I like to do that. So we intend to try to enjoy our opportunity to live here in this community. But I must be honest with you, we have other duties. As you know, I'm going to be teaching over at the University of Minnesota and at Macalester College. I want to say to any of the young prospective students that it isn't going to be the ordinary kind of teaching, I intend to try to make it a living experience for our students, and for people in the community and the faculty; where we'll talk about the realities of government and of the world in which we live. I've often said that I felt that I owed every student that I ever taught in the years prior to going to Washington a refund because I used to teach American Government. What I found out after I got to Washington as compared to what I taught, there was very little relationship. And I feel now I ought to come back and set the record straight and let the young people and the others know just what really goes on, and what is happening as I see it in our Country.

This State has been exceedingly good to the Humphreys. We have had the privilege of public life because of the people of Minnesota. First the people of Minneapolis, when I served as their mayor; and the people of this State as their Senator for 16 years; and the people of these United States for four years in the Vice-Presidency; and then this last year in a most thrilling and engaging and exciting campaign. I don't think I need to tell you that it was an uphill battle from the beginning but we entered into it with a fervor and with a spirit that I think stood us well. We came out of it, while not victorious, I think we came out of it with a feeling that we had done well; that we carried out our assignment with honor and dignity and integrity. You have to be able to live with yourself before you can live very well with anybody else. We felt that we learned much and we had an opportunity to meet millions of people and after all when you can get over 30 million people to say you ought to do something, why that's something. And it was a wonderful, wonderful experience for us. The fact that Minnesota supported us as it did meant so much and the fact that Wright County supported us as it did meant so much to us. We want to thank you. We know that the people here, regardless of partisanship, gave us their help. We want you to know that this is deeply appreciated. After all, I've often said in this State that if it wasn't for my Republican friends I don't suppose I'd ever really get elected. So I'm a very bi-partisan fellow in a partisan sort of a way. So we've learned to work together and live together. Now I just want to end up with just a few solid thoughts for you. I was on the phone today with Joe Garagiola, you know this fellow you see on the Today Show. Well Joe is a great friend of mine. He said he was going to come out here. He wanted to know whether or not I was going to be Baseball Commissioner. There's been some talk about that, you know. I didn't feel I was the right man, and he said, "Well why is that?" He said, "The last time that you and I got together was at the Baseball Writers' Dinner in Washington, and by the way," he said, "Muriel walked in on you while you were making a speech." Do you remember that night, Honey? We were making about four meetings in Washington. She was handling one, and I was handling another, and we both came together without either one of us knowing it. We were having a great time, and I said, "Well, Joe, I don't think I'm the man because I said I'm prejudiced." And he said, "What do you mean by that?" And I said, "I'm for the Twins." And I said, "The guy that's going to be Baseball Commissioner has got to be absolutely judicious and he's got to be totally objective and that just can't be." I said, "I'm out here in Minnesota now and I'm going to start managing the team. Last year I didn't have time enough. I was trying to manage me, and both the Twins and me ended up as you know what." So but next year I'm gonna put my time on the Twins again. The year before I used to do a good deal of that, that's a fact. In 1967, I'd be out travelling around and I'd be listening to the ball game and the Twins weren't doing well. I'd call up on the telephone, call up right to the ball club and tell them to pull that pitcher. They say the guy that's there running the team doesn't know as much as what's going on as some of us fellows looking in. You don't believe it? Get in politics. You always find out the fellow that's looking in on you knows more than you know. At least he lets you think so.

So we'll be back here having a little fun. I was telling Joe, that in seriousness for the monitor program in his show "The Year-End Roundup" some of the things that were on my heart. He was asking me about what I was going to do and I indicated, as I have to you in part, what I'm going to do. We're going to be doing more than teaching. We're going to be here in Minnesota. We're going to be back in Washington part of the time. I shall be travelling around this country doing some lectures. We have some wonderful opportunities. I've never known there could be so many good opportunities. My cup runneth over, so to speak. My real problem is deciding what I want to do but we made part of the decision. Then I said, "Joe, I want to tell you something." He said, "Well first of all, what's your resolution for the next year?" I said, "I'm strong on resolutions. I can make them easy. Sort of like quitting smoking. It's easy to quit. I used to quit. I quit about 20 times and then finally one stuck." I said, "Resolutions don't mean too much to me except just for the fun of it." But I'd like to reflect on what's going to happen and what I think has happened. I just jotted a note here or two and I'm going to take a look at it because I want to tell you what I said to him. I said we're living in a year of dramatic change and that's the way to characterize this year.- this past year - It was unpredictable, a year of tragedy- a year of violence - a year of spectacular change and uncertainty. And yet I think it was a year of growth and a year

of really new purpose. You just reflect in your own mind for a minute and you'll see what I mean. I believe that the coming year is going to be a better one because of the troubles we went through in the past year. This whole period in which I've been in Washington has been. It is a period now of almost 20 years. It is just 20 years. That period of 20 years has represented the most dramatic change in this country and the world that we've ever known. When I came to Washington in 1948, the winter of '48, and as Congress of 1949 there were 55 members of United Nations, today there are over 125. The world is changed. It came in 1948. It was age year 3 of the Nuclear Age. Today it is year 23 of the Nuclear Age. The Nuclear Age of fear. When I came to Washington in 1948-49, there was no space program. Now we are in the 10th year of the Space Age, and look what we've witnessed the past day or two. I wonder if we really realize what we witnessed. That fantastic achievement of the lunar Apollo 8 flight, and what it means. It wasn't just Borman, and Anders, and Lovell, and these are men that Mrs. Humphrey and I know as we know you, I talked to them, by the way, yesterday on the S. S. Yorktown. I called them early right after they landed. The connection wasn't very good and I could only just barely hear them and they could barely hear me. I waited until I heard the President talk to them. That's one thing you learn as Vice-President, you know. I was uptown here visiting some friends and I happened to be in the Midwest Federal Building. I was looking at their chapel dedicated to Dr. Reuben Youngdahl, a dear and beloved friend of mine now departed. And while I was in the chapel, one of my men of the Secret Service came in and said, "That call from the S. S. Yorktown is ready now." And I said, "Gee, I already talked to them." He said, "No, they have a good clear channel and they want to have a visit with you." Well I got on the telephone, and wasn't it a coincidence that you're in, they call it, The Chapel in the Sky and here I'm talking to the astronauts that have just literally come from the heavens. I talked to Colonel Borman, Captain Lovell, and Major Anders, and I'll let you know that one of the things I told them was that while you fellows were horsing around up there on the moon I was talking to your wives, joking with them a little bit, you know. But on Christmas Day I did have a nice visit with Susan Borman, Marilyn Lovell and Valerie Anders, these are wonderful people. But I tell you this for one reason. That it tells us about what is going on. Imagine getting a color television photo in your home from the S. S. Yorktown, 1,200 miles southwest of Honolulu and being able to literally see the miracle take place before your eyes. Imagine those photos from the moon with a little television camera less than 20 watts power sending those pictures back to us. Communication has made the world a neighborhood. Wendell Wilke called it "One World" 28 years ago in his campaign of 1940. He was a prophet. We now hear people say, "What are we doing out there messing around in space anyway for?" Because it's the neighborhood that we live in, the solar system, and we need to learn about our neighbors and the moon is one of them. And Venus and Mars and Jupiter and the sun are other members of this neighborhood and we are not going to be the kind of a people that we ought to be until we know about our neighbors and what the effects of these areas of the universe are upon our lives. So we are in that age. The Nuclear Age. The Space Age. The Age of Science and Technology. We are in the age of organization with its restlessness. We are in the age of youth. This is a younger nation and this youth power that is available in the world today is a dramatic new force. Well I think we are in the best time of our lives. Let me tell you why I say so. Look what's happening! The crew from the Pueblo is back. How well I remember during the campaign how I used to have people say, "When are you going to get them back?" I knew that one of these days we'd get them back. But all I needed to say was something wrong and they wouldn't come back, because you have to be very careful, but here they are. Home. Safe. Thank God. And here's Apollo 8 representing this country. No other nation in the world was able to do what we do and we had people downgrading our country everyday. Some people think they prove themselves to be highly intelligent and brilliant by debunking America. Without a doubt, this is the most fortunate and blessed country that God ever created or man ever inhabited. And we ought to be proud of it. Maybe it takes 3 astronauts to travel a half a million miles to prove it, but I think they've proved it. The whole world stands in wonder at us. And in Paris today there is the hope of peace in Viet Nam to end this terrible war. So things are better and I'm mighty glad that I had a chance to participate, as a citizen and a public official, and hopefully making them just a little better. But, I don't want you to think that this is an obituary. I always have to caution myself and you because every once in a while one of my reporter friends starts writing that

he's going to run for office or something like that. There are a lot of ways to serve without running for office. I've had public office. I've had a taste of it. I liked it. But there are many other ways to serve, like being a teacher. Like working with young people. Like taking part in this development of your city, your county, like just being a good citizen, and I wouldn't be a bit surprised if maybe in the days ahead that's the way that I will serve, and that Muriel will serve. I'm not at all sure what the future has to offer, but one thing that I'm sure about is, it is going to be better than the yesterdays; and there isn't anything you can do about the yesterdays anyway, because after all, it was colder two days ago than it is now. And I happen to think that it'll maybe get a little better before Spring so I'm not going to take anymore of your time except to say that you have blessed us with your friendship and your fellowship. You have made us very proud and very happy. We hope that in the days ahead, we can make you proud- prouder. We hope we can do something for you like you have done it for us. And we hope that these months have made you understand that this is a great country and that the days ahead will make you understand that it can be even greater. Thank you very much.



Minnesota Historical Society

Copyright in this digital version belongs to the Minnesota Historical Society and its content may not be copied without the copyright holder's express written permission. Users may print, download, link to, or email content, however, for individual use.

To request permission for commercial or educational use, please contact the Minnesota Historical Society.



www.mnhs.org