

REMARKS BY SENATOR HUBERT H. HUMPHREY

Before the  
NATIONAL EXPLORER PRESIDENTS' CONGRESS

Sheraton Park Hotel  
Washington, D.C.

April 4, 1974

Whenever the word "explorer" is mentioned to some people, it brings to their minds a bronzed, athletic sort of man or woman -- perhaps one who has climbed several mountains or taken a trip up the Amazon. But as a former Scoutmaster, and one who has been familiar with the programs of the Explorers for years, that word means far more to me.

It means that there is an organization of young people with active, inquiring minds who have launched into the exploration of the many complex and diverse facets of this modern world.

It is not only the physical features of this world that need exploration, it is every discipline of the mind, every method of government and perhaps some things that are too new to have been regarded seriously yet.

I consider "exploration" in the broad sense of the word as one of the most important activities of the human race. For without exploration there would be no discovery, no progress, and worse yet, little spirit of creativity. Without these, the hope of the world for better days would be without substance.

I would like to consider myself an explorer, even though I have not had the opportunity to become an Explorer with a capital "E." But I was a Scout in Reverend Hartt's Troop 24 back in the little town of Doland, South Dakota. Later, I was a Scoutmaster of Troop 6 in Huron, South Dakota.

Back in those days our people were pretty down on their luck. Dust storms and a Depression had left them with few of the items that we sometimes regard as necessities today. We had a rule that no one could have a new uniform, because we didn't want any boy to feel inadequate or inferior. So we passed around second-hand uniforms and tried to outfit each boy from the hand-me-downs of older brothers. We made some of our camping equipment.

Old Troop 6 was versatile when it came to meetings. We didn't even start out as a church basement operation because the church budget, like everything else, was the victim of the Depression and didn't stretch far enough to pay for heating the basement.

We were sponsored by the Good Fellowship Class of the Methodist Church, and my first meeting was held in the church's vestibule during a dust storm. Later on, we met outside the church, in the basement of Humphrey's Drug Store and in my living room.

But we got the church basement heated, even though we had to explore a rather unorthodox financing method. I think this little incident might better define what I meant by the broad use of the word "explore." We truly had to explore our ingenuity to come up with this one.

We announced a big troop bean feed and promoted it all over town. A big crowd turned out and shivered through the meal. We had conveniently forgotten to tell the folks that the basement wasn't heated. But after the bean feed, enough money came from somewhere to have it heated for us from then on.

I did my Scouting work right with the boys, starting as a Second Class Scout. I went on to Life Scout, but unfortunately, I didn't have the opportunity to finish my work as an Eagle Scout. We had six Eagles in Troop 6, and that was good for those days.

The Explorer program adds an all-important dimension to Scouting. It provides a bridge for that crucial crossover into adulthood.

I know that government is one of the areas that Explorer units study. Naturally, I think that involvement in government is one of the most exciting activities in the world. It is also truly an area of interest that needs and deserves your most careful attention.

The current difficulties of some officials and former officials have led some to believe that young people should not get involved in government. That is a frightening thought. What if most of the bright young people of this country suddenly decided to shy away from public service? The effect would be devastating.

It has been said that people get the kind of government they deserve, and if we ever should be unfortunate enough to frighten bright young people away from the service of their institutions of government, we would deserve the poor government that would follow.

The activities of the Explorer program stimulate interest in the kind of activities that government should be involved in. As leaders in this program, I urge you to go back to your home states and encourage others to actively pursue their interests in government. By that I mean their interest in this nation's problems.

What opinions do you have on how to solve this nation's energy crunch? How do you feel about the cost of health care in this country? What is your position on campaign reform, anti-pollution measures, tax reform, grain sales and a whole host of other problems that face this country?

I'll tell you this. Unless you have a position on these issues, unless you take the trouble to study some of them and get other Explorers and other young and not-so-young people interested in them, you may find that your elected officials do a much poorer job of legislating to solve them. And your administrators may do a much poorer job of carrying out that legislation.

Those of us in the Congress and the people down at the White House cannot and should not be allowed to operate in a vacuum. The intelligent, considered opinions of the people of this country, and especially the leaders like yourselves, are just as necessary as those of us who hold office. Ideas, good ideas, are the grist for the mill of legislation. And I can tell you from experience that Presidents and Senators and Congressmen and Governors and Mayors have no monopoly on good ideas.

So, my young friends, continue to explore. Explore government and athletics and a hundred other areas. And if you keep it up until you're my age, you will have made this world a better place to live.

# # # # #

Bill Rusk  
Nat. Chairman  
of Exploring  
et mmls

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BEFORE THE  
NATIONAL EXPLORER PRESIDENTS' CONGRESS

SHERATON PARK HOTEL  
WASHINGTON, D.C.

APRIL 4, 1974

Politics

Pres. Steve Polli  
Utah

President - Elect

Mary Wright - new mass

Miss Beth Carson  
1st V.P.

WHENEVER THE WORD "EXPLORER" IS MENTIONED TO SOME PEOPLE,  
IT BRINGS TO THEIR MINDS A BRONZED, ATHLETIC SORT OF MAN OR  
WOMAN -- PERHAPS ONE WHO HAS CLIMBED SEVERAL MOUNTAINS OR TAKEN  
A TRIP UP THE AMAZON, BUT AS A FORMER SCOUTMASTER, AND ONE WHO  
HAS BEEN FAMILIAR WITH THE PROGRAMS OF THE EXPLORERS FOR YEARS,  
THAT WORD MEANS FAR MORE TO ME.

↳ IT MEANS THAT THERE IS AN ORGANIZATION OF YOUNG PEOPLE WITH  
ACTIVE, INQUIRING MINDS WHO HAVE LAUNCHED INTO THE EXPLORATION  
OF THE MANY COMPLEX AND DIVERSE FACETS OF THIS MODERN WORLD.

↳ IT IS NOT ONLY THE PHYSICAL FEATURES OF THIS WORLD THAT NEED  
EXPLORATION, IT IS EVERY DISCIPLINE OF THE MIND, EVERY METHOD  
OF GOVERNMENT AND PERHAPS SOME THINGS THAT ARE TOO NEW TO HAVE  
BEEN REGARDED SERIOUSLY YET.

SP / I CONSIDER "EXPLORATION" IN THE BROAD SENSE OF THE WORD AS ONE OF THE MOST IMPORTANT ACTIVITIES OF THE HUMAN RACE, / FOR WITHOUT EXPLORATION THERE WOULD BE NO DISCOVERY, NO PROGRESS, AND WORSE YET, LITTLE SPIRIT OF CREATIVITY. / WITHOUT THESE, THE HOPE OF THE WORLD FOR BETTER DAYS WOULD BE WITHOUT SUBSTANCE.

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/ I WOULD LIKE TO CONSIDER MYSELF AN EXPLORER, EVEN THOUGH I HAVE NOT HAD THE OPPORTUNITY TO BECOME AN EXPLORER WITH A CAPITAL "E." / BUT I WAS A SCOUT IN REVEREND HARTT'S TROOP 24 BACK IN THE LITTLE TOWN OF DOLAND, SOUTH DAKOTA. LATER, I WAS A SCOUTMASTER OF TROOP 6 IN HURON, SOUTH DAKOTA.

BACK IN THOSE DAYS OUR PEOPLE WERE PRETTY DOWN ON THEIR  
LUCK. DUST STORMS AND A DEPRESSION HAD LEFT THEM WITH FEW OF THE  
ITEMS THAT WE SOMETIMES REGARD AS NECESSITIES TODAY. WE HAD A  
RULE THAT NO ONE COULD HAVE A NEW UNIFORM, BECAUSE WE DIDN'T  
WANT ANY BOY TO FEEL INADEQUATE OR INFERIOR. SO WE PASSED AROUND  
SECOND-HAND UNIFORMS AND TRIED TO OUTFIT EACH BOY FROM THE HAND-  
ME-DOWNS OF OLDER BROTHERS. WE MADE SOME OF OUR CAMPING EQUIPMENT.

OLD TROOP 6 WAS VERSATILE WHEN IT CAME TO MEETINGS. WE  
DIDN'T EVEN START OUT AS A CHURCH BASEMENT OPERATION BECAUSE THE  
CHURCH BUDGET, LIKE EVERYTHING ELSE, WAS THE VICTIM OF THE  
DEPRESSION AND DIDN'T STRETCH FAR ENOUGH TO PAY FOR HEATING THE  
BASEMENT.

WE WERE SPONSORED BY THE GOOD FELLOWSHIP CLASS OF THE  
METHODIST CHURCH, AND MY FIRST MEETING WAS HELD IN THE CHURCH'S  
VESTIBULE DURING A DUST STORM. LATER ON, WE MET OUTSIDE THE  
CHURCH, IN THE BASEMENT OF HUMPHREY'S DRUG STORE AND IN MY  
LIVING ROOM.

BUT WE GOT THE CHURCH BASEMENT HEATED, EVEN THOUGH WE HAD TO  
EXPLORE A RATHER UNORTHODOX FINANCING METHOD. I ~~THINK~~ THIS LITTLE  
INCIDENT MIGHT BETTER DEFINE WHAT I MEANT BY THE BROAD USE OF  
THE WORD "EXPLORE." WE TRULY HAD TO EXPLORE OUR INGENUITY TO  
COME UP WITH THIS ONE.

L WE ANNOUNCED A BIG TROOP BEAN FEED AND PROMOTED IT ALL OVER  
TOWN. L A BIG CROWD TURNED OUT AND SHIVERED THROUGH THE MEAL. WE  
HAD CONVENIENTLY FORGOTTEN TO TELL THE FOLKS THAT THE BASEMENT  
WASN'T HEATED. BUT AFTER THE BEAN FEED, ENOUGH MONEY CAME FROM  
SOMEWHERE TO HAVE IT HEATED FOR US FROM THEN ON.

L I DID MY SCOUTING WORK RIGHT WITH THE BOYS, STARTING AS A  
SECOND CLASS SCOUT. I WENT ON TO LIFE SCOUT, BUT UNFORTUNATELY,  
I DIDN'T HAVE THE OPPORTUNITY TO FINISH MY WORK AS AN EAGLE  
SCOUT. WE HAD SIX EAGLES IN TROOP 6, AND THAT WAS GOOD FOR THOSE  
DAYS.

THE EXPLORER PROGRAM ADDS AN ALL-IMPORTANT DIMENSION TO SCOUTING. IT PROVIDES A BRIDGE FOR THAT CRUCIAL CROSSOVER INTO ADULTHOOD.

I KNOW THAT GOVERNMENT IS ONE OF THE AREAS THAT EXPLORER UNITS STUDY. NATURALLY, I THINK THAT INVOLVEMENT IN GOVERNMENT IS ONE OF THE MOST EXCITING ACTIVITIES IN THE WORLD. IT IS ALSO TRULY AN AREA OF INTEREST THAT NEEDS AND DESERVES YOUR MOST CAREFUL ATTENTION.

THE CURRENT DIFFICULTIES OF SOME OFFICIALS AND FORMER OFFICIALS HAVE LED SOME TO BELIEVE THAT YOUNG PEOPLE SHOULD NOT GET INVOLVED IN GOVERNMENT. THAT IS A FRIGHTENING THOUGHT. WHAT IF MOST OF THE BRIGHT YOUNG PEOPLE OF THIS COUNTRY SUDDENLY DECIDED TO SHY AWAY FROM PUBLIC SERVICE? THE EFFECT WOULD BE DEVASTATING.

IT HAS BEEN SAID THAT PEOPLE GET THE KIND OF GOVERNMENT THEY  
DESERVE, AND IF WE EVER SHOULD BE UNFORTUNATE ENOUGH TO FRIGHTEN  
BRIGHT YOUNG PEOPLE AWAY FROM THE SERVICE OF THEIR INSTITUTIONS  
OF GOVERNMENT, WE WOULD DESERVE THE POOR GOVERNMENT THAT WOULD  
FOLLOW.

THE ACTIVITIES OF THE EXPLORER PROGRAM STIMULATE INTEREST  
IN THE KIND OF ACTIVITIES THAT GOVERNMENT SHOULD BE INVOLVED  
IN. AS LEADERS IN THIS PROGRAM, I URGE YOU TO GO BACK TO YOUR  
HOME STATES AND ENCOURAGE OTHERS TO ACTIVELY PURSUE THEIR  
INTERESTS IN GOVERNMENT. BY THAT I MEAN THEIR INTEREST IN THIS  
NATION'S PROBLEMS.

- too big? too complex?  
no - "The Ancient Chinese Proverb -  
"The Longest Journey Begins with a  
Single Step"

Confucius "If a man take no thought about  
what is distant, he will find sovereign  
man at hand"

WHAT OPINIONS DO YOU HAVE ON HOW TO SOLVE THIS NATION'S  
ENERGY CRUNCH? HOW DO YOU FEEL ABOUT THE COST OF HEALTH CARE IN  
THIS COUNTRY? WHAT IS YOUR POSITION ON CAMPAIGN REFORM, ANTI-  
POLLUTION MEASURES, TAX REFORM, National Food Policy ~~GRAIN SALES~~ AND A WHOLE HOST OF  
OTHER PROBLEMS THAT FACE THIS COUNTRY?

I'LL TELL YOU THIS. UNLESS YOU HAVE A POSITION ON THESE  
ISSUES, UNLESS YOU TAKE THE TROUBLE TO STUDY SOME OF THEM AND  
GET OTHER EXPLORERS AND OTHER YOUNG AND NOT-SO-YOUNG PEOPLE  
INTERESTED IN THEM, YOU MAY FIND THAT YOUR ELECTED OFFICIALS DO  
A MUCH POORER JOB OF LEGISLATING TO SOLVE THEM AND YOUR ADMIN-  
ISTRATORS MAY DO A MUCH POORER JOB OF CARRYING OUT THAT LEGISLATION.

THOSE OF US IN THE CONGRESS AND THE PEOPLE DOWN AT THE WHITE  
HOUSE CANNOT AND SHOULD NOT BE ALLOWED TO OPERATE IN A VACUUM THE

INTELLIGENT, CONSIDERED OPINIONS OF THE PEOPLE OF THIS COUNTRY,

AND ESPECIALLY THE LEADERS LIKE YOURSELVES, ARE JUST AS NECESSARY

THE OPINIONS OF

AS THOSE OF US WHO HOLD OFFICE IDEAS, GOOD IDEAS, ARE THE GRIST

FOR THE MILL OF LEGISLATION. AND I CAN TELL YOU FROM EXPERIENCE

THAT PRESIDENTS AND SENATORS AND CONGRESSMEN AND GOVERNORS AND

MAYORS HAVE NO MONOPOLY ON GOOD IDEAS.

SO, MY YOUNG FRIENDS, CONTINUE TO EXPLORE, EXPLORE GOVERN-

MENT AND ATHLETICS AND A HUNDRED OTHER AREAS. AND IF YOU KEEP

IT UP UNTIL YOU'RE MY AGE, YOU WILL HAVE MADE THIS WORLD A BETTER

PLACE TO LIVE.

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THIS COUNTRY WAS BUILT ON THE CONCEPTS OF FAITH AND CONFIDENCE AND DESTINY AND PURPOSE.

THE FOUNDING FATHERS DIDN'T PLAN ON THE CITIZENS OF THIS COUNTRY JUST LEADING A BLEAK, DAY-TO-DAY EXISTENCE. RECALL THE WORDS OF THOMAS JEFFERSON IN THE DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE:

"WE HOLD THESE TRUTHS TO BE SELF-EVIDENT, THAT ALL MEN ARE CREATED EQUAL, THAT THEY ARE ENDOWED BY THEIR CREATOR WITH CERTAIN INALIENABLE RIGHTS, THAT AMONG THESE ARE LIFE, LIBERTY AND THE PURSUIT OF HAPPINESS. . ."

WHILE IT IS TRUE THAT MANY OF OUR CITIZENS DOWN THROUGH THE YEARS HAVE LED LIVES THAT WERE PRETTY BLEAK, WHEN YOU COMPARE THE RECORD OF THE UNITED STATES WITH THAT OF OTHER COUNTRIES YOU CAN'T FIND ONE THAT HOLDS A CANDLE TO IT.



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