

BEMIDJI SPEECH DRAFT -- MINNESOTA SECONDARY SCHOOL
PRINCIPALS - JUNE 17, 1967

It is a real pleasure to be here this morning.

You can't quite realize how great it is. We've been chained to our desks this week listening to the debate on the Dodd censure resolution. I want you to know how much I now appreciate the problems of the audience, and my remarks this morning will be brief. You may wish to ask some questions, which I'll be happy to try to answer.

I say happy to try to answer for two reasons. First of all, it is very difficult right now to make predictions about what will happen to education legislation in the Congress. Things are moving much more slowly than we all estimated they would. Besides that, this is an unpredictable Congress in some ways, full of surprises. And we don't know how it will all settle down.

Second, some of the answers just aren't available and won't be. I'm thinking particularly of the aggravations of scheduling that have occurred in some programs and of the absence of dramatic new proposals for new programs. We sometimes politely call this Congress a period of consolidation of several of our legislative accomplishments, and education is no exception to this.

Your concern with education is probably mostly with the

present and future and less with the past. But I do want to take a minute or two to explain what I believe the intent of Congress has been and remains with regard to federal education programs and especially to the ones with which most of you now have some experience.

I believe there is almost no argument any more with the statement that the 89th Congress will go down in history as an agent of real change in the federal sector of education and many other programs. It was my first Congress as a participant, and it was breathtaking.

It would be wrong to separate the education effort in that Congress from the other accomplishments, for they were all aimed in the same direction. The last Congress set itself the task of bringing disadvantaged people into the mainstream of American economic life, of providing new opportunities for those Americans whose situations had become relatively worse as the American economy and opportunity had moved ahead and left them behind.

The Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 was no exception to this movement. Three-fourths of the effort centered in Title I, which brought just over a billion dollars to the specific problems of low-income children.

Recently I had a conversation with two school superintendents from northwestern Minnesota, and I asked them about the effects this Title had had on their school programs.

For one of them, the aid from Title I was a small part of the school budget, something just over five per cent. For the other, Title I contributed more than 40 per cent of his budget. That's what Title I is all about.

Another characteristic of P.L. 89-10 was the deliberate effort that was made to bring a partnership between local educational agencies, state agencies, and the federal government. Part of ESEA was built as direct aid to local agencies under plans designed by the state. Other parts required not only a state plan, but review of specific proposals by state agencies. Title V was deliberately aimed at strengthening state educational agencies, and I know you have already begun to see the results of that effort.

There were indirect efforts in the 89th Congress as well to get at the problems of disadvantaged students. Head Start needs no introduction. The Teacher Corps aimed at bringing young people into the teaching force with special ambitions to help disadvantaged areas.

You may be interested in knowing that a separate bill is now going through the House of Representatives which is aimed at saving the Corps for the summer. It has an appropriation for this summer's training, but as of today there is no authorization for the coming year. So, Representative Green is moving a separate bill, in hopes that it will clear faster than the ESEA amendments and higher

education amendments and can be in effect by July 1st. I supported the Teacher Corps and I have been tremendously impressed by the work that has been done. It is right on the target of aid to disadvantaged children, I believe.

These are only examples. Aid to disadvantaged children was not the only thrust of ESEA and the other educational efforts of the Congress, of course. But you have seen -- you are seeing, how important a part of the effort it is.

Now let us move to the present Congress. There appears to be no fundamental threat to the federal involvement in education. But there are two evident changes in the atmosphere in the Congress, and there is one great new effort which I think has been underestimated by most people.

I said before that this Congress is sometimes politely called a Congress of consolidation. To the extent that it is that, it is entirely appropriate. After the thrust of the 89th Congress, it makes sense to look at what has been done and to make the changes that will fulfill the intent of Congress more effectively. And that is certainly going on. One of the reasons that education legislation is moving somewhat slowly is surely the necessity of evaluating and recommending changes.

But one of the changes in the Congress is more than consolidation. It is a new resistance which manifested itself in the House of Representatives during the recent consideration of ESEA amendments. This was more than consolidation, and I believe it came directly out of the

Congressional elections of 1966.

The proposed amendments to the Act from the Republican side were billed as a movement to place more of the programs under state administration. Certainly they succeeded with that in Title III in the House, although it is difficult to predict what will happen in the Senate. But something else was involved as well, and this attempt was not successful. There was a strong indication that the commitment to the disadvantaged is still not accepted by a significant portion of the Congress.

Congressman Quie's amendments proposed to reduce the proportion of the authorization that would fall under Title I from three-fourths to one-half of the total package. A series of special programs in ESEA would have been removed -- for children of migrant workers, for example. The Teacher Corps would have been eliminated.

The question of the federal-state-local partnership, and the degree to which each sector is involved, is likely to continue to be controversial. But aid to disadvantaged children really should not be an issue. I just want to suggest that it is not entirely the method of administration that is involved in the considerations of the current Congress.

A second evident change in the atmosphere has to do with recommendations for appropriations. As we consider legislation in the Congress, we deal both with authorizations and appropriations, and too many people ignore the

power of the Bureau of the Budget and the Appropriations Committees in framing the total impact of legislation.

I have received many messages of concern over appropriations for Title III of the National Defense Education Act, for example. It is a fine example of the difference between authorization and appropriation, and it is one of the things I'm worried about in this Congress.

The present level of expenditure for Title III is \$79.2 million, which is used, as you all know well, for equipment and services on a matching basis with local school districts. It is a state-coordinated program which has brought great benefits to all of your schools, I know.

If one takes the authorization for the next fiscal year as an indication, things look good for Title III. That authorization is \$96.8 million, an amount which would carry on the program at least at its present level.

But the Bureau of the Budget has recommended an appropriation for this title of \$47 million. That is a cut from present levels of 35 per cent in a program of local and federal effort-sharing that has demonstrated its effectiveness. Something less than \$6 million of that cut comes from moving the servicing aspects of Title III into Title V of ESEA. But the net result is still a

recommendation of a drastic cut in a successful program which is still needed.

A second example illustrates the same tendencies. Title III of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act has been a controversial one in the House of Representatives. The amendments passed there turn responsibility over to the state agencies, as you know.

I don't know what the fate of that change will be in the Senate --I have mixed feelings myself about it because I agree in principle that the federal government should be a junior partner in education and, at the same time, I can see the benefits of evaluating innovation from a national perspective through the kinds of panels that the U.S. Office of Education has been using.

But that isn't really the point. Suppose the amended Title III should pass the Congress essentially as it is. The budget recommendation is such that all of the appropriation would have to be used to sustain those programs which have already been established. There would be no new programs possible under the new administrative structure until the present commitments had been met.

I'm worried about that. I'm impressed by what I have seen of the projects which have been awarded in Minnesota.

They vary in size and intent, but nearly 30 have been approved since the beginning of 1967, including a small but important one right here in Bemidji. Some of these

are plans for future projects, and many of them involve cooperation among groups of schools. The ideas and energy and new relationships stimulated by this effort should continue and be expanded. But it is going to take a fight to do it.

Part of this new atmosphere is a result of the war in Vietnam, of course. Part of it is undoubtedly reaction to the strides that were taken in the 89th Congress. Part of it is just plain resistance to change in effort and structure.

But it worries me because of the expectations of all of us have been raised by the effort of the 89th Congress, and I do not want to see those expectations discouraged. I believe we can afford better education, and I believe that we can afford to experiment with better education for the disadvantaged, no matter how expensive it is. I agreed with the intent of Congress in the 89th Congress, and I still agree with it in this Congress.

But the news is certainly not all news of consolidation. One of the sleepers of this Congress is an act which was recently passed by the Senate without opposition, that can yield great dividends for education, here in Minnesota and elsewhere. This new law is the Public Television Act of 1967.

This Act will continue the educational television

facilities programs enacted in 1962 to assist in the construction of new educational broadcasting stations.

It will establish a Corporation for Public Broadcasting along lines generally proposed by the Carnegie Commission. And it will authorize the Secretary of Health, Education and Welfare to conduct a study of instructional television to recommend the support and organization required to utilize television most effectively in formal instruction.

The significance of television to the education of young people cannot be overemphasized. Research indicates that children begin school with greater vocabulary, greater reading skills, greater awareness of the world as a result of television. They can, for example, read with ease most of the billboards advertising beer and soap.

A strengthened school television effort would have vast potential to improve the effectiveness of instruction. Given proper support for the development of excellence in quality, television can be used to demonstrate, to present specific learning experiences, to motivate independent performance, and, of course, to bring the events of the world into the classroom for analysis and discussion.

Really good television can help schools keep up with the rapidly changing face of our society, the rapidly changing skills and knowledge which we require, and the

urgently changing requirements of peaceful and productive relationships with the variety of cultures and countries with which we share this planet.

I believe that this Act, with its small initial authorization of \$9 million, may turn out to be the most significant peice of educational legislation in the present Congress.

James Reston has hailed it as possibly "one of the transforming occasions of American life," comparing it to the Morrill Act which established land-grant universities in 1862 and quietly transformed public higher education.

Of course, the immediate impact of this act will not be so great as that of the Acts of the 89th Congress. It will take longer, but the potentialities are tremendous, I believe.

Other proposals are also before the Congress. Since I am directly involved in two of them, I would like to suggest what they may offer. I was pleased to be able to join Senator Gaylord Nelson of Wisconsin in sponsoring the Teacher Aid Program Support Act, which authorizes the Commissioner of Education to make grants to local educational agencies and institutions of higher education which jointly submit approved project applications for teacher aide programs. The reaction to this Act has been generally good, and I am hopeful that there will be some progress on it in the current Congress. I believe that it can make valuable

contribution to the work of teachers, especially in disadvantaged areas where children need a great deal of special help.

Let me summarize by saying that there is one bill before the 90th Congress of great importance to the future of education in the sense that it represents the possibility of a significant new thrust. That is the Public Television Act of 1967.

For the most part, the other action centers on consolidation, modification, and expansion of present legislation. The controversies are over methods of administration and whether the thrust should continue to be directed primarily to disadvantaged children. Expectations of substantially higher appropriations in this Congress will require great effort if they are to materialize. Although federal assistance to elementary and secondary education is well established, there are still many controversies and there are some irritating problems of scheduling and administration. I believe that this Congress has the responsibility to try to solve those problems, and I see an attempt to use some of them as means of resisting increased effort in a Congress whose atmosphere is changed somewhat from the 89th, especially in the House of Representatives.

If you were to ask me what I think the major responsibility of school administrators is in regard to education in the 90th

Congress, it is to let the Congress know which specific portions of the program have been successful and which have not. It is to push hard for what you believe to be worthwhile. It is to bring your difficulties with the programs to the attention of those who can change them. It is to enter actively into the ferment that has begun to take place in educational planning and administration, to be willing to experiment, to try out the new local relationships which are developing.

As a United States Senator who is dedicated to the provision of better opportunities for all, I would also like to ask each of you to accept the challenge to bring the best possible education to the disadvantaged, for that has been and continues to be the thrust of the official effort.

And if you have ideas for new legislation, and if you need assistance or information that we can provide, I ask you to keep in touch with my office.

Pittsburg, Kansas
K. S. C. of P. Commencement
June 5, 1967

File

EDUCATION AND THE PUBLIC RESPONSIBILITY

President Budd, distinguished members of the faculty, graduates, students, and friends of Kansas State College of Pittsburg.

I'm pleased to be here tonight in the homeland of Dorothy, the little girl who made Kansas weather and Judy Garland famous.

Tomorrow I'll head back over the rainbow to Washington, to the United States Senate and its cowardly lions and scarecrows and all its other characters. Maybe one day I'll find the wizard, too.

It's always wonderful to be allowed to speak at a commencement, especially a college commencement. Somehow it is a sign of dreams and promises that have come true, and it is truly so in our Great Middle West.

The 1200 or so of you who are receiving degrees today represent a tremendous investment, and not only in terms of your money and your effort and the material and non-material resources that have been gathered together on this campus to make this day possible for all of you.

Somewhere back there, in the founding of this college and the many others like it that mark the landscape of this region, there was an investment of faith.

I like to think that some of your leaders of the past had at least an inkling that what they were starting would turn into what Kansas State College of Pittsburg has become. I admit it is hard to believe that they foresaw that thousands of people would be gathered here today as witnesses to this annual ceremony of graduation.

But whatever the size of their conception, there was one. And it was based on faith -- faith in the future of people, faith in a system that demands education for its business, for its government, and for its quality of life.

It is impossible to overestimate the magnitude of the vision and its accomplishment that is Kansas State College of Pittsburg. For their investment has brought a huge profit.

And education itself has become almost an organic being itself, feeding on the knowledge of the past, giving birth to new knowledge at an astonishing rate, increasing itself in almost geometric proportions, and giving

unbelievable benefits to the human beings who nurture it and are nurtured by it in its never-ending life.

And this being exists not only at Pittsburg, Kansas, but at St. Cloud, Minnesota, and Slippery Rock, Pennsylvania, and Berkeley, California everywhere that the investment has been made and continues to be made.

New colleges and new kinds of colleges spring up everywhere alongside the old ones, and the old ones continue to grow. They also change, as the needs of the nation require more of its people and new things of its people.

And the colleges contribute to the conception of the nation as the nation contributes to the conception of the colleges, in a continuous interaction between the people and those who would change them.

For change is what education is all about. It is a cliché to mention it, but it is easy to forget.

I remember a controversy not very long ago in my home state of Minnesota, when claims were being made that its great university should be investigated because it was subversive. The fears of many, I believe, were made

eloquent by the mother of a University sophomore. "I sent my daughter away to the University," she lamented, "and when she came back she just wasn't the same anymore." We are bound to be worried by change, but it is the price of growth.

Like the pioneers of this great region who made a great experiment with state support of public higher education, we are pioneering today on the national level. Some of the experiments being undertaken today may one day be judged as bold and visionary and magnificent as ~~then~~ we judge the great attempts of the past.

We have learned to think of education as a national resource rather than a purely private one of local one. And along with that change in our conception has come a parallel change in our method of support.

Among the graduates here today are many with bachelor's degrees, a good proportion with master's degrees, and some with specialist's certificates beyond that level of attainment. Every single one of you has been directly affected by the new federal involvement in higher education.

Many of you have had federal loans, and look forward with more or less enthusiasm to repaying all or part of them. Many have contributed to your own educations and to

the collegeeas well through the college work-study program, where 90 per cent of the money you have earned has come through federal grants.

Many have used library materials which federal support made possible. Federal support has contributed to particular programs in which students and faculty have been involved, and the list goes on, and it will grow longer.

And more than half of the graduates at this commencement will teach in schools where the federal involvement continues to grow.

Almost all of today's graduates will send their children to schools which have been eriched and will be enriched by a variety of federal investments. More than \$4 billion in programs were administered by the U.S. Office of Education during the current fiscal year, and contributions came from many other agencies as well.

Public funds have always gone to education, of course. But we are beginning to see a growing federal involvement as we continue to see education as a part of The Public Responsibility. Education is now fully

established as a public, national effort.

And the Public Responsibility for education is taking other forms as well. As a nation we are coming to realize that powerful educational forces exist outside the classroom and outside the formal educational institution.

We have always known that experience was a teacher of sorts, whether the best or something less than that. Now we are beginning to consider seriously the quality of the experiences that make up education outside the classroom.

One of these experiences, is the experience of television. It always comes as a shock to me to realize that most of you who are graduating today have lived virtually all of your lives with television.

That is a benchmark that separates us as generations, and it is also a sign of the growth and change that has characterized our lives. The founders of this college may have had a vision of 1,200 graduates in a single year of Kansas State College of Pittsburg, but I cannot imagine that they saw how pervasive a part of your lives television would be.

But television has always been a part of your lives you may view it somewhat differently from the way those of my generation do. The fact that the average American spends about $3\frac{1}{2}$ hours a day watching television may not be a matter of concern or importance to you.

It may seem perfectly normal and acceptable to you that one and half billion man hours per week are spent in this country watching television. You may not be at all surprised by the phenomenal growth of television as a medium of communication and entertainment within the span of your lifetime, nor troubled by television's impact on this country's citizens.

Indeed, you may simply view television as one of the great advances in civilization which your predecessors are proudly passing on to you.

To some considerable extent such a reaction would be quite understandable and would have some basis in fact. The technology which has made television possible is truly indicative of the means now available to weld together the people of this nation and the people of the world -- to bridge areas of misunderstanding and make possible direct

communication among cultures of various types. The technological capability, however, is clearly not being utilized entirely for these objectives.

Of the billion and a half man hours a week spent with television in this country, only the smallest fraction is devoted to enlightening the human mind or better the human ~~mix~~ condition.

Technology has provided a capability which we have not yet shown ourselves able to use to its fullest advantage for the improvement of man. This magnificent medium has been used in this country primarily to titillate rather than teach, to entertain rather than educate.

Our failure to exploit the full potentiality of television provides the background for what may turn out to be one of the most important federal ventures of our time -- the Public Broadcasting Act of 1967.

In his State of the Union message to the current Congress, the President declared that "we should develop educational television into a vital public resource." The Public Broadcasting Act of 1967 has now passed the Senate, in a measure to provide for continued development of educational broadcasting to serve the needs of our people more completely.

This proposal is a clear recognition by the President and the Senate that television should be as much a part of our public concern as the highways upon which we drive, the lakes upon which we fish and in which we swim, the forests in which we hunt and hike, the air-- hopefully pure -- which we breathe.

We are concerned about our safety on the highways, our happiness in the outdoors, our health in our atmosphere. We also have -- and are now recognizing -- a public responsibility to assure the wisest and most beneficial use of the broadcast frequencies over which radio and television programs are ~~transmitted~~ disseminated.

The Radio Act of 1927 and the Communications Act of 1934 clearly established that the airwaves over which radio and television programs are transmitted into our homes belong to the people.

Stations which broadcast on assigned frequencies -- or airwaves -- do so by the consent of the people. Only so long as they fulfill their obligations and maintain their operations in the public interest are they eligible to continue such transmissions.

The very basis upon which radio and television broadcasting exist -- the airwaves over which the programs are transmitted -- are a public resource belonging to all the citizens of this country. It is indeed time to more fully develop that resource to meet the highest aspirations of the citizenry.

Important progress can be made in that direction by developing educational television into a vital, dynamic force in our society -- by helping it become a service truly alternative to the narcotizing diversions to which we have for the most part been submitted.

We have a well laid foundation upon which to build for a growing and dynamic educational television service in this country. In 1951, 242 channels were reserved by the Federal Communications Commission for such educational television stations. By May of 1962, 82 ETV stations were on the air broadcasting on these assigned frequencies.

In 1962 the Congress enacted the Educational Television Facilities Program and for the first time support was available from the Federal Government to assist in the construction of new ETV stations.

That program is due to expire in July of this year, and so it is possible at this point to assess its success. When the program expires there will be 183 ETV stations on the air or under construction, more than doubling the

number of such stations which the program was initiated.

The number of people served by these educational television stations will have increased from 105 to 155 million people. However, to achieve our goal of serving 95% of the people of each state with educational television at least 200 more stations will be required.

At the same time that this growth in broadcast facilities has been taking place, ETV's impact on the society at large has also been increasing.

In 1962 for example, approximately $2\frac{1}{2}$ million have viewed an ETV station at least once a week. By 1966 that figure had more than doubled; ETV today is reaching more than 6 million American homes once a week.

It is impossible to estimate that during any given week-day evening hour ETV is being viewed by 700,000 to 1 million people in this country. In addition, about $6\frac{1}{2}$ million students from kindergarten to the 12th grade during the 1965-66 school year received some of their classroom instruction by way of those same educational television stations.

The quality of the programs presented on ETV has also shown some improvement. National Educational Television has perhaps dramatized this improvement of quality most.

The President's State of the Union message last January, for example, marked the first time that a live

And it will authorize the Secretary of Health, Education and Welfare to conduct a study of instructional television to recommend the support and organization required to utilize television most effectively in formal instruction.

It can indeed be said that this has been and continues to be educational broadcasting's year. Public awareness of the potential of educational broadcasting has probably never been higher.

But the public's expectations of educational broadcasting also have increased. The challenge to make significant progress, therefore, is that much greater.

The significance of television to the growth and change -- to the education -- to young people cannot be overemphasized. Research indicates that children begin school with greater vocabulary, greater reading skills, greater awareness of the world as a result of television. The can, for example, read with ease most of the billboards advertising beer and soap.

In schools, of course, a strengthened television effort would have vast potential to improve the effectiveness of instruction. Given proper support for the development of excellence in quality, television can be used to demonstrate, to present specific learning experiences, to motivate

independent performance, and, of course, to bring the events of the world into the classroom for analysis and discussion.

Really good television can help schools keep up with the rapidly changing face of our society, the rapidly changing skills and knowledge which we require, and the urgently changing requirements of peaceful and productive relationships with the variety of cultures and countries with which we share this planet.

To meet needs of these dimensions we need to enlist every resource at our disposal, not the least of which are the newest and most comprehensive means of communication.

But public television as envisioned in the Public Broadcasting Act of 1967 has ~~mp~~ potentialities far beyond classroom applications.

In a letter to the Carnegie Commission on Educational Television, E.B. White spoke of the opportunity noncommercial television in these words:

"Noncommercial television should address itself to the ideal of excellence, not the idea of acceptability - which is what keeps commercial television from clinging the staircase. I think television should be the visual counterpart of the literary essay, should arouse our dreams, satisfy our

hunger for beauty, take us on journeys, enable us to participate in events, present great drama and music, explore the sea and the sky and the woods and the hills. It should be our Lyceum, our Chautauqua, our Minsky's, and our Camelot. It should restate and clarify the social dilemma and the political pickle. Once in a while it does, and you get a quick glimpse of its potential."

Imagine the public service broadcasting unconfined by the need to sell products, by the need to reach the largest total audience with commercial messages that all too often emphasize quantity of sales and not quality of product.

Imagine programming which could base its judgements about content on esthetic grounds of service to the citizen enthusiastically rather than grudgingly.

Imagine television offerings which could be directed to special audiences without the necessity of considering whether such audiences are massive, without worrying about whether ~~xxxxxxxx~~ only 16.3 million watch the program compared to the 17.2 million watching another station.

Imagine, in short, a powerful communicative tool which is perceived as a means of enriching the lives of the American people rather than the bank accounts of American corporations.

Imagine having a real choice.

That is what may be in our future under the Public Broadcasting Act of 1967.

The Act and its authorization of \$9 million is only a first step toward these goals. But James Reston hailed it as possibly "one of the transforming occasions of American life," comparing it to the Morrill Act which established land-grant universities in 1862, and quietly transformed America public higher education. It is a recognition on the part of the Congress and the President that this powerful medium of education is also a part of the Public Responsibility.

As public television develops, the investment will be large. Both the instructional aspects of television and the general educational aspects will require many times this year's proposed appropriation.

Public Television will never be self-supporting, just as Kansas State College at Pittsburg will never be self-supporting and was never intended to be. It will require a continuing commitment of common treasures in the interest of growth and change--in the interest of education, which today may be the single great requirement for the preservation of our way of life.

This is a world of international and domestic tension.

This is a world of technology which is outstripping our capacity to deal with it as human beings. This is a world which requires sensitivity and powers of judgement among its citizens in proportions unmatched in any place or time.

This is a world which requires the marshalling of all of our resources of education. The power of television is one of those resources, and it must be used so that the spirit of the individual is not suppressed but is allowed to flourish and grow.

Our goal is simply state: we want to achieve the betterment of man through the proper application of man's knowledge. It will tax our wisdom, our strength, our purpose, our resources, to achieve that goal. It is the goal of education, in and out of institutions of learning.

This is the Public Responsibility.



MINNESOTA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Copyright in the Walter F. Mondale Papers 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