

file

[After Aug 6, 1945:
Nov 9, 1945]

SPEECH BY HUBERT H. HUMPHREY AT THE EMANUEL LUTHERAN
CHURCH, 1304 MUNROE ST. N.E., FRIDAY, NOV. 9, 8:00 P.M.

Thank you very much, Mr. Vandermide, I'm sorry that I kept you and the other gentlemen but I've been on pins and needles about being here this late. As a matter of fact, I had another engagement ahead of time. I didn't have any breakfast and was getting inoculated for the mumps and besides that I had to go over to St. Paul this noon and speak and we had a meeting ahead of that one which necessitated my being late for that one, too, so I didn't eat much lunch. So I took a little time down here tonight and stopped down here at one of the cafes and took on a good steak. And I feel right good right now. In fact, I feel so contented and so peaceful that I hardly know if I'm capable of giving the kind of a talk that I intended to give to you, because I wanted to make it somewhat spirited.

This is a real privilege to be able to talk to people who are truly interested in the activity of the church and I say of the church because I surely concur that there is one church. It is not the matter of sectarianism. Often times church people use a good deal of their energy thinking only in terms of a denomination rather than thinking in terms of the church of Jesus Christ and its full meaning.

I have spent a good deal of time working with young people. As a boy out in South Dakota I was interested in the Methodist Church and Epworth League work. My close young friend who today is the Associate Professor of Theology at Yale University. He's the same age I am - Julian Hart. His father was the local Methodist minister and became very active in these young people's activities within the church. Julian and I went through highschool together, debated

together, we played football and basketball together, we scrapped together, we got into trouble together, we just had a good time together. At college we had a parting of the ways. He went to Dakota Wesleyan and I came down to the University of Minnesota. But his start at Dakota Wesleyan was a very good one because from there he went to Northwestern University and then from Northwestern

University, after receiving his Doctor's Degree, he went to Yale University and today as a young man of 34 he's one of the outstanding Professors of Theology in all of our large Universities. I feel it's a real compliment to know that kind of a person. And may I say that his influence on my life has been great. Great in the sense that he has understood the problems that confront young people and we, some of us, still consider ourselves not to be octogenarians. My wife tells me don't talk about yourself being a young person - you're not half as young as you think you are and I think maybe she's right, but at least I like to identify myself with the younger set because I think in that younger set is the hope - the real hope - and I'm not just saying it in a way that we often say things, but the real hope of the future of America and the real hope of this city and other cities of similar size and of like characteristics.

Now after having some work with Epworth League I spent 6 years as a boy scout master and those were real years. In fact, sometimes I wonder how my good wife stayed with me because I was going a great deal of work in business with my father and I used to get two nights a week off and one of those nights was dedicated to boy scouts and the other night we managed to find a little time for ourselves. I remember the boy scouts - Tuesday nights - 6 years in a row. And in that period of six years we had twelve boys that were parolled to us from the juvenile courts - 12 boys. All of them would

have had to serve, under ordinary circumstances, terms in the state reformatory and out of all the 12 boys, all 12 of them came out just fine. In fact, I would say that the majority of the 12 were better than the boys who were supposed to be good boys. All 12 of them served in the armed forces of the United States and two of those boys served with great distinction. I feel that's a great privilege to have that opportunity to work with young people. I remember we established club rooms. We established those club rooms for these young people in the attic of the minister's home and boy what a time we used to have there and we brought all the books together that we could possibly get together, the games, and we gave a great deal of our time to making it better for to give opportunity, you might say we let them make their own opportunities, their own fun in these club rooms.

Then when I came down here to the University of Minnesota I used to affiliate with young people's groups and I spent some time over here at the University of Life at the Hennepin Avenue Methodist Church -- $2\frac{1}{2}$ years teaching over there and then also an equal amount of time at the First Congregational Church. I am very candid to tell you that I surely am one of those persons who practices inter-denominationalism. I was literally, let me say, joined the membership of the Methodist Church, was married in a Presbyterian Church, was originally baptised in a Lutheran Church and at the present time or up until the last year taught sunday school in a Congregational Church. Now some people may not think that's very good. They say where do your loyalties lie. My loyalties lie with the church. And I'll be very candid with you I find that there is the same message wherever you go. It may be dressed up a little differently here and

there but it is very much the same message and we not only are loyal to our church but we try to participate in any little way that we can wherever we find a home - a church home.

As a Professor over at Macalester College, a fine school, I think one of the nicest schools in this area -- I say one of them because we have many fine colleges in the Twin City area -- I had the privilege of working in my classes with 152 young people -- that was the enrollment in the classes I had. And that 152 young people, that group that represented the young people of Macalester College was one of the most challenging groups I've ever had the chance to be associated with. Besides that, we had an average of 400 army boys in the Air Corps Training Detachment and I had 9 of those classes -- 9 classes in that grouping of 400 and I recall so well that as we set up those classes that at the end of each one of the terms after their course of study was completed, the boys had the opportunity to select somebody to be their so-called commencement speaker. They used to have a banquet at the end of each class that came through and I was there from class 16 to class 15 and I gave 9 of the banquet talks and I guess about 8 of the commencement talks and I felt pretty good about it. I got to like those fellows and we struck up a real fellowship and even when I was running for Mayor of this city I used to get letters from the boys that used to be in the Army Air Corps Training Detachment over at Macalester from all over the world and they would clip out little items that appeared in their local or army paper in the Yank or in the Stars and Stripes and send it back and there's a real thrill in knowing that young people are taking that kind of an interest.

What about then the Christian's responsibility for citizenship. I think it ought to be pretty clear. I don't think we need

any speech on it. To be very honest, a Christian is a person by the very nature of the principles to which he adheres and the philosophy which he believes. A Christian is a person who is interested in good living. In living a good life. In doing that which he can as Jesus said in the Lord's Prayer of ~~traying~~^{used} somehow to arrive at heaven on earth. ~~I wish~~ to say quite candidly to my young people that if you don't believe this sort of business, quit going to church and quit talking about it because there's a lot of other things for people to do except just mussing up their life, you know, going to church and never believing anything they hear. There's so little time available to do all the things we ought to do that there's very little use in going out and doing something that you don't believe in. And believe me, as Christian people, sometimes I think we accept a lot of things without even as much as thinking about it and we accept them without ever practicing it. I have heard business people, I know of business people who surely haven't practiced Chrisitan ethics in their business and yet they contribute very generously to their church. That isn't being a Christian, in my mind. We all are sinners. Everyone of us can recognize it. We all make mistakes -- we make a lot of them but as long as we recognize the fact that we're making mistakes and as long as there is a grain of repentence in our hearts or what we call conscience I think there's still hope. As a matter of fact, I always used to feel that the great difference between the Hitler system or Facism as it is known and that of democracy is simply this -- that while by and large there may be some things that seem to be done in a similar vein that in Hitlerism the things that you and I know to be wrong were eulogized as being the cardinal principles of virtue. For example in Hitlerism there was definitely the idea of segregation, of discrimination, of intolerance and those were blown up by his progagandists into being virtues. Not mistakes, not sins,

not errors but virtues. Now we recognize, for example in our own country, that sometimes we use the principle of right makes right. Sometimes labor disputes are settled that way. The stronger party winning without any sense of justice. Sometimes we treat our fellow men that way. Whether we like it or not, just before I came up here, I picked up one of the little pamphlets in the back of the room and I noticed that little pamphlet "My World Missions" and I noticed some quotations from the New Testament in the little pamphlet and it points out that he made of one every nation of men. There is only one race, the human race. God would have all men saved -- God has no favorites. He is the creator of all hence every individual is precious to him. Now the great question is folks, do we just read that or do we believe it. I mean, anybody can read it. Hitler would have read it but if we really believe it then we're making a terrible lot of mistakes because we do practice discrimination. We discriminate against our colored people. We discriminate against many of our own people who were born in this country -- people even of the white race or of what we call the Caucasians. We surely have anti-semitism. We surely have anti-Nisei feelings ~~among~~ ~~amongst~~ ~~Japanese~~ -Americans. And there surely has been some discrimination in terms of other racial groups and yet the Christian philosophy and it is the Christian creed that ye are all one. You're neither Jew nor Gentile; you're neither bond nor free. Ye are all one. You see I feel that politics is very much tied up with Christian ethics. I don't think there's any way that you can ~~xxx~~ separate politics and Christian ethics. That doesn't mean that we're always going to do the right thing but as far as the set of principles are concerned we ought to tie them together. When people are strictly expedient in political life then they're not necessarily adhering to what we call a system of standards or principles and without a system of standards or principles

you are living in a society that is bent for chaos. It has often been said by philosophers that when a society leaves idealism and goes to materialism, that from materialism it goes to cynicism, and skepticism and from skepticism it goes to what we call neolism which is nothingness and that's exactly what Hitler had - nothingness. No positive moral values whatsoever. All the immoral things were made moral values - a complete reversion of everything that was good and true. Therefore when we as a people fought a war and won that war against what we called the forces of barbarism and oppression it was in a sense a holy crusade. Yet it is ever clear that when you win a war that you do not necessarily win a crusade. That when you win a war on a military battle front it does not necessarily mean that you have gained your objectives.

I have often compared the winning of the war like the winning of an election. It just tells - it just merely states which side is going to be in power, that's all. When an election is over you don't know what's going to come, you're just hoping. When a war is over you don't know what's going to come, you're just hoping. You're waiting for the program to be unfolded and for the program to be fulfilled.

Now during the period of the war we had a program and we stated some things about that program. We stated for example in the principles of the Atlantic Charter that every nation should have the right to enjoy political independence; that every nation should have free and equal access to the channels of trade - the international flow of trade. We talked about the self-determination, the rights of self-determination people. Now the great question is that we've won the war what are we going to do about it. You see Hitler had a program, too. It was very simple. We were all to be slaves and I can guarantee that if he'd have won the war he'd have been busy fulfilling the program.

You'd have been enslaved by now. If you were not put in concentration camps those who were willing to stand up against them, you'd have been enslaved by the fact that you accepted what he had to offer, as did millions of people of Europe. Very few were in the resistance movement. Only the valiant ones, only the stalwart ones -- the rest of them went along because they had to eat. They had to have shelter over their head, they had ~~xxxxxx~~ families to take care of and most people under those circumstances do go along even if they resent it, even if they're opposed to it, they want to revolt but they do not have the means to do it.

Then when we come to this day in our age or this time in our period of life as a national power what are we faced with. Well, we're faced with such great things as this. We're the people that let loose upon this world the power of the atomic bomb. We created it. That's the hottest potatoe that the American people have ever had a hold of.

We know what it means. I hope we do. I hope every person in this audience recognizes that the instrument of destruction which was created by this power to win a war is such a powerful mechanism of destruction that the whole society is living on borrowed time. Until sometime or other we can morally discipline ourselves to know what we are going to do with it. This isn't like the creation of gun-powder. The universe is filled with atomic energy and great scientists were worried in the very first experiments that when that atomic energy was exploded and it explodes in rapid succession, that's the way it gets its power -- it's like these firecrackers when you let off a whole package and start one it goes right down the line until each blast gets much harder. The great scientists that perfected this instrument of destruction were worried that it may have set loose a fire in the universe that would have destroyed the whole world. Now that's not fantastic. Remember that

these scientists only isolated a little uranium and out of that they were only able to liberate one-thousandeth of one percent of the energy which was available. That's the very first thing -- that's like the little lady-finger firecracker that you let the three year olds play with before we decided that children shouldn't play with firecrackers any more. It isn't like the six-inch cannon fire cracker that some of you had when you went to 4th of July celebrations or the three incher that we had when I was a boy. In other words, we haven't as yet developed the atomic energy but you can rest assured that scientists all over the world tonight are eagerly searching for it.

Now if this world is going to be one in which we permit dictatorship to exist, if this is a world where we permit people who are unscrupulous to have political power, if we're going to be a part of a world in which we permit self-seeking, bigoted, intollerant power-drunk people to be in political office wherever they may be then we're living on just the hair-line of destruction because the scientists tell us and they told the United States Senate that the next war w could be fought by remote control. Nations could unleash this power hundreds of miles away from the point where you push buttons. You just have buttons on your desk and you just touch them and by remote control bombs are sent across the sea by jet-propulsion or by rocket bomb. Or airplanes without any pilot, guided by an electrical beam, the science of electronics can carry this instrument of destruction within such accuracy that at a distance of 5,000 miles you can be within a quarter of a mile of your target and remember that the bomb that was used at Hiroshima and Nagasaki destroyed everything in a six mile radius.

Well I think maybe if we just think about it just a little bit you'll wonder why a fellow even wants to be mayor. When I have people write to me about their garbage and I have them write to me about whether

or not their alley is paved, and those are important problems to us on a local level, when I have write to me about the little matter of taxation at home and whatever else the problem may be, I think to myself "good grief, what do you ever want to be in this job for". The world's on fire and here you are with the squirt gun, trying to put out some little blaze here and there. Literally what it amounts to . Yet nevertheless all of these great decisions that have to be made on a world-wide level must be started out at home. You're not going to be able to produce the leadership that's going to be able to master the national and international problems unless you develop it somewhere along the line and the best development ground that I can think of for political statesmanship, for economic statesmanship, for any kind of statesmanship that this world needs is right close to the people.

Because we wouldn't want any statesmanship that isn't close to the people because it can't be trusted. Whenever a person in political life is far removed from the people watch out because there is something about power - it begets power. And the great challenge to democracy at all times is to restrain men who are in power. If you could only reflect with me and I know you will for a moment -- how few men there are in this world/^{that} today control the destinies of men. Every time I have been in Washington, every time I have read about great international conclaves or conferences and I hear that 40 men were there, or a hundred men were there out of the $2\frac{1}{2}$ billion men that inhabit this earth and the hundred that were represented for example at the great international conference, they have the switches in their hands and they can either turn them on one way or another or direct the course of the ship, the ship of state, one direction of another. All you need to think about is how few people actually have in their hand

the instrumentalities of control. And we're living in a society where it becomes ever more apparent that power is being concentrated. The atomic bomb is symbolic of the kind of a society we are living in. Concentration of power. Labor unions are bigger every day, stronger every day. Business organizations are bigger every day, stronger every day. Every conceivable group is being organized into groups with powerful superstructures, executive committees and directors and chairmen, with orders being given and orders being taken. We're living in a society of groups and these groups are becoming every more closely integrated.

All of which means that there is one force in society as we know it that can be a force for moderation, that can be a governor upon a rather wild and turbulent instrument that we have created. And that force of society is your government because in this democratic society of ours, our government represents the people. It doesn't always represent the best interests of the people, but it can. The main reason that government gets away from people is because people leave their government. They think of the government as a third party.

The government is not a third party. There are only two parties -- that's one set on one side and one set on another side and out of that comes majority rule and the government represents the majority and the minority. Every person elected to political office in a democracy is not only obligated to the majority but he's obligated for the protection of the right and the wishes of the minority. That's our political system and may it ever be that way because majorities can be just tyrannical as minorities. A minority can be any one person or 49 and 99/100% of the people persecuting the other 51.01 of the people.

It's important that people be ever vigilant. Patrick Henry once said that eternal vigilance is the price of liberty and sometimes I think that we have forgotten it. When I hear people complaining about how bad the government was during the period, for example, of the 1920's. I mean there were teapot dome, oil scandals, there were scandals in the veterans administration, there was the stock market crash and we've blamed Warren G. Harding for practically everything that came down the line and we blamed Herbert Hoover and maybe we ought to go back and blame ourself just a little bit, too. Because in a democracy a government is like a mirror. You see your own image when you look into it.

People weren't interested in their government. They didn't even vote. 38% of the people voted in the election of 1928, that's all. 38% of the registered electorate. And when 38% of the registered electorate goes to the ballot box, what do you expect. You do not get majority opinion. You don't even get a good minority opinion. And whatever may be said about those years from 1930 to 1945, at least during that period of time people were activated politically because in your last election more than 70% of the adult population of America voted. At least it was a cross-section, an opinion of the people. And you might keep in mind that Mr. Landon, who was the candidate in 1936 that was roundly defeated only carrying two states received more votes in 1936 than his predecessor, Mr. Hoover, received in 1928. In fact Mr. Landon had received more votes than any other man who aspired to the presidency with the exception of Franklin Roosevelt and he didn't even come close to winning. He lost every state except Maine and Vermont. But at last the people were somewhere near alive. Maybe they didn't always make the right decisions but they were politically alert. And I think people today can be and will be more politically alert -- I hope so.

Because government is going to make some real decisions, friends. The government is going to make the decisions about the atomic bomb, the government is going to make the decisions about our participation in international organization. The government is going to make the decisions about the great problems of reconversion, Now business people may hope that that isn't true but why go on hoping for something that isn't going to happen. If you're looking for government to be littler and smaller and less, you're looking for something that just isn't here. I'm here to tell you that government today is big and it's going to be big because everything else in society is big -- the church is big, labor organization is big, business is big, everything is big today. And that means that the power of government itself must be strong. It must be strong because if it isn't big business, big labor, big every other organization will grind out any individualism that there is in anybody. It'll grind out the right to be individual because bigness within itself sometimes moves along a path without any concern as to the rights of a little individual that happens to get in the way. And the one instrumentality ~~xxx~~ of power that can protect that individual's right is his government because it is his government. Now as Christians we're interested in government. We're interested in the principles of our democratic government. Isn't it thoroughly Christian when you hear for example from the July 4, 1776 declaration that all men are created equal. They were all endowed by their Creator by certain inalienable rights of life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. That's as christian as the sermon on the Mount and that is the very creed of democratic government. That all men are created equal, that they're endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights of life liberty and the pursuit of happiness. That's the very basis of our government

because it merely states quite catagorically that no power has the right, no power except God himself, has the right to take away from man his inalienable right, his right that was never given to him by government, his right that was never given to him by business or labor or anything else but came with him as a person. As a person created in the image of his Maker. The right of life and of liberty and of the pursuit of happiness. The only justification that I know for democracy is a moral justification. I cannot prove to you that it's more efficient. I cannot prove to you that it's more dynamic. I can't prove to you that it can best administer government but I can prove this to you that it's based upon some moral principles that without those principles society will be destroyed. And that's the important thing.

When I hear people getting into long political debates as to whether this is a Republic or Democracy I could laugh. Surely it's a republic in terms of structure, representative government. But a republic without a set of principles is nothing. The thing that makes this country great is its creed, its philosophy of living, its philosophy of life. And that creed came out of some very good men. It's the creed that was exemplified in the covenant and the pact, the compact of the Mayflower. It's the creed that came along with the old Puritans, back in the days of 1660, 70, 80 and on up the line. It's the typical creed of the early American colonist and the early American citizen and that creed was written into our Constitution and it was written into our Declaration of Independence and it's been transplanted back into every community. There's a great interest in the welfare of common man because common men were the men that Jesus was interested in and sometimes I might say it might be a good idea for us to think about that just a little bit. Now I recognize that it's nice to have an education. I recognize that it's very very good to be in high places of position. I respect

people. I have a great and profound admiration for people that are successful in business. Successful in their profession. Successful in their organization. Successful in the clergy. Successful in education. But you know Jesus Christ didn't go around selecting off all the best ones. I mean he didn't take the scribes and the pharisees unto him. When He wanted his 12 disciples he just walked along and picked them out of the common run of men and remember this that on Peter the one that was so close to him, the impetuous one, Peter was nothing but a fisherman. A very lowly occupation in those days and he said "Peter, follow me" and I will make you a fisherman of men". I wonder how many people ~~xxxx~~ of democratic faith have really understood that Jesus made great men out of little people and common men and that is, after all, the real significance of whatever political implications ~~xxxx~~ there happens to be in the philosophy of Jesus Christ. He took little insignificant people that amounted to nothing in their day and made great men out of them -- the 12 disciples. And to be quite human about it, one of them was a betrayer. And that's about the average that you find in the common run of mortals at this time. They're not all good, they're not all bad. There's a little bit of the good and a little bit of the bad in all of us. And I was always impressed by the stories of Peter -- the one who would deny in one moment and protest to high heaven in the next moment that he never denied. The one who was the impetuous one that would stand up like everyone of us would and fight like a demon and slash off ears or whatever else it may be and then the next minute be very repentant. Isn't that quite human? And that's why I think there's such a great story to be told in the philosophy of the New Testament and its teachings. And I think there's another story for young people and I've often thought about this -- young people need to

remember that this great one who was the leader of all men wasn't exactly an etherial body that just happened to stride along through the clouds, that he was a very vibrant and a very vital and strong person. An immensely strong person and a humble one. The son of a carpenter, a working man. Maybe there is some dignity to labor and if I were a labor organizer I would use it and point out to the people that the great one was really a laboring man to start out with. He was one who earned his living by honest toil. That really lends some ^{meaning} ~~dignity~~ to the dignity of labor. And to the young people I would say this that he didn't have to live forever, in terms of this earthly living, to get his message across to the people. That you don't have to live to be 90 to do something because Jesus was crucified when he was 33. And in those three years of ministry from 30 to 33 he performed miracles in every sense of the word. Performed miracles -- a young man so when I hear people say well, young man you have to be a little bit careful, you haven't had these years of experience, I remember it was Thomas Jefferson who was 27 when he wrote the Declaration of Independence. I remember that it was Keats, the great English poet who died when he was 21 and some of the greatest poetry of all times was that of Keats and he was dead when he was 21. I remember it was Alexander Hamilton who was yet a young man when he was secretary of the Treasury and was yet literally in his youth when he was in the Constitutional Convention and one of the great minds of America and then to top it all off I remember that the Sermon on the Mount was given by a young man, a very young man, who had somehow or another given to this world a message that is eternal and it was given by a young man. The youth is not a matter of age nor is wisdom a matter of age. After all there are many an old person in terms of chronological age that has what I call young

spirited ideas. The Oliver Wendall Holmes, the Justis Brandis, the Benjamin Franklins -- remember Benjamin Franklin was 87 years of age when he was the guiding light of the Constitution Convention -- one of the strongest minds that was there. Remember that it was Oliver Wendall Holmes who served on the bench even when he was in his 90's and remember, too, that it was Justice Brandies who, in his 80's, was one of the strong minded men. Young in spirit, liberal minded, progressive minded, not hugging the delusive phantom of the past but looking to the future and yet I have had students in my class rooms who were 18 and they'll never have another idea as long as they live. The last idea they had was when they were 14 and that was that they had the idea that someday they were going to be 18. I mean they just simply didn't come up with any ideas. They were unwilling to explore. They somehow or other had been so intimidated mentally and spiritually that they were afraid and yet I think it was said that you must speak the truth and the truth shall make you free. That's why when you're a teacher sometimes you feel ~~that~~ a great sense of liberation. I think if you're a good teacher you will seek the truth and you won't worry about what the powers that be say. Jesus didn't. There were very few people that agreed with him. I think that's a great inspiration to a person in political office. He' wasn't on a popularity contest. He said things that made everybody that was in high place at his time angry. How many of you remember the story of the wheat field ~~and~~ and of the Sabbath as Jesus and his friends were walking through and he reached down and picked off some of the heads of the wheat and I can just see him because I've done exactly the same thing as a boy out in the Dakotas walking through the great wheat fields and you know you blow off the chaff and eat the wheat kernels and apparently that's what Jesus and a few of his friends were doing and all

the smart fellows were along the edges of the field -- the Scribes and the Pharisees and they've been trying to trip him up now for about 2 $\frac{1}{2}$ years and he'd been putting them aside each and every time, he was too smart for them and this time they said, "now, we've got him, because it's written in the law that man shall respect the Sabbath, that he shall not work on the Sabbath, that he shall be forever in prayer, that he shall be forever religious and holy during the Sabbath and here is this young man this fellow that comes through with radical ideas" and they were plenty radical, remember that, there has never been a greater radical in terms of social organization than Jesus. He challenged every power of his time, every one of them including Pilate himself and the Roman empire, including the church of his day, and they said, now, we have him. Do you know what he said. He just looked around, he didn't become perturbed, which showed his greatness. We who become disturbed and shout and holler, we do not show our greatness, we show our emotion and he just turned around ~~hm~~ and he said now, is man made for the Sabbath or is Sabbath made for the man? And there have been many a person who has been trying to answer that question ever since. Of course, there is one answer and that is that Sabbath is made for the man. And by Sabbath we mean institution. The institutions that are created for man's good. The economic order, the political order, Remember the idea of the divine right of kings. They call it divine right because they wanted to cloak their grasp of power, their whole position in society by divine, some sort of a divine cloak. They wanted to keep it out of the field of argument. Didn't want any rational or logical approach to it. They said that this king is by the grace of God. Don't talk about it. Just don't talk about it. But the thing that inspired, the thought that inspired some people to talk about it when they found out that kings

were oppressors and when they found out that kings were not always benevolent, was the fact that after all, the Sabbath was made for the man. That institutions of government have no particular santimonious place in society, that they are to serve people and people are close to God -- they are a part of him and as such all the institutions of society should be made to benefit the people. Those that were so close to them. Remember it was the same Jesus that said "whatever you do unto the least of these, ye do unto me also". Now, why have I gone through all of this. I don't always, every speech I give but it always motivates my thinking. I have a political philosophy. Some people say I'm a progressive; some people say I'm not so progressive and not sure what I am; some people say I'm a radical and some people say that I'm a liberal and I always say that I'm just interested in politics and I hope to be a progressive in politics. And I mention these things to you because it's the thing, these are the thoughts that give me what I call my own political philosophy. I'm interested in human welfare not because its politically expedient to be interested in good pensions for the aged people but because I believe that whatever ye do unto the least of these ye do unto me also. And for the life of me I cannot find out any reason why a person could not and should not be charitable and why a person should not want to provide charity but opportunity because you don't build character but just giving charity. You build character by affording opportunity. So that people can use their abilities, not to hide their talent under a bushel but to use their ability and its the duty of people in government and its the duty of people in civic responsibility whether its in business, profession, labor, education, whatever it is to so arrange the society of which we are a part so that men, all men and

women of whatever their capacity can utilize their abilities to the best of their capacity. In other words, to remove the handicap. That's what we did when we organized this country. We made it possible so that your son can be president. He didn't have to be a member of royal blood, as if there ever was any such thing. He didn't have to be. A haberdasher from Missouri, if you please, can become president of this country. You can be a person that couldn't even write his own name, like President Johnson, and become president of this country or you can be a humble rail splitter and still become president of this country. We arranged things in this society so little men could become great men. We ever perpetuate that. That's why, for example, when I see industry that monopolizes. When I see high finance that thwarts the ambition of smaller people, I'm against it. I'm not against big business as such. I'm not against big international finance, as such, I'm against it only when it destroys the rights of some smaller people to have an opportunity to become some big people. I'm definitely against it. And I feel exactly the same way on the other side of the fence. I feel that for example that if labor ever gets to a point where it destroys the rights

?

There are a lot of big people that aren't very great. There are a lot of little people who are very great. Some ~~px~~ little people in their own homes who carry out a good family life, who take care of their children and bring them up to be good citizens, are a lot greater than some people who become big. Big in the financial way, or big in an organization way and have nothing but trouble and turmoil in their homes. They give unto the society apparently nothing but material blessings, do not give good citizenship, do not give good leadership. Those people aren't great, they're just big. And I often think in our little city of Minneapolis, little in the sense of this world, but the 18th largest city in the United States -- I think of all

the unsung heroes that are here in Minneapolis. Every time I read the newspaper I sometimes become a little bit disturbed and I'll tell you why. Oh, when we have automobile accidents you can get your picture in the paper, or when the Humphrey kids have mumps we get our picture in the paper but nobody ever took our picture for the paper when we were just really happy out there and never had any sickness and yet that's the happy time and no one ever took the picture of a mother and a father that's just out here working their little garden in the summertime, mowing the lawn, painting the house or fixing it up and they're working and striving so that they can save enough money so they can send their son or daughter to college and when they get all through they have a nice family reunion, etc., that isn't news, is it? You don't get your picture in the paper or your name in the paper on that basis. But if there's a divorce in the family, or if somebody gets into a row, and either the husband or the wife is driven out into the street with an apparent avalanche of shoes, kettles and whatever else may be thrown, or if there's an accident or if there's some kind of a tragedy or some kind of a disgrace in the family, you get your name in the paper. We report the unorthodox. We report the things that are supposedly unusual. The same thing is true of our city. If there's a murder in 500,000 people that's news. The fact of course that 499,999 live without shooting each other, that's not news. That isn't news to some people. To me it's good news. And when I read in the paper that there are a few hold-ups, a few burglaries, and I recognize that there is anywhere from 500,000 to ~~57~~ 750,000 people in Minneapolis every day of the week and every hour of the day because we have people coming in and out of this city, and I read for example that we have a few people who apparently want to do things that are beyond the law and that's reported

in the paper, I recognize that that's something you have to acknowledge and you're going to have to admit that that's part of what we call news, but how many people are there in this city that just don't get into trouble? The vast majority. In other words, the community is basically good. Basically, really good. Good parks, good schools, good churches, good business, good men in labor, finest skilled labor in America is in Minneapolis -- the very best. Every worker in this city of Minneapolis in a war plant produced twice as much as the average war worker in the United States. Mark that one down. That's the record of the War Department. That shows what it means to have people who have the roots deep into the community, who own their own homes, who have their children here and have educated them here, who belong to church and fraternal organizations. It means something. This is a community that is basically a good one. And we need to develop some of the civic consciousness that every community needs -- we need to be proud of our city. Recognize its liabilities, right. Clean up its slums. I'm for slum clearance because I think every person ought to have the right to live in a good place and a good home. You can't build good citizens by trying to have them elevate themselves from the slums or the tenements or the blighted areas or the gutter. When I think of the people who have been on relief, we've paid out thousands upon thousands of dollars in this city for relief and we've rented homes, supposed homes, for people who were on relief, paying out fancy prices in rent to keep the poor people living in the poorest conditions and then we wonder why they're poor. Well, you're never going to elevate people by keeping them in the gutter. You're somehow or other going to have to give them a set of circumstances where they themselves can lift themselves. All of the things that I fight for as your Mayor, and may I say we've had a few scraps, too, the things we fight for -- better police administration

and I can assure you with all the conviction at my command that this city is going to have good law enforcement. There's to be no compromise. There isn't any heat that's on. I don't know anything about thermostatic control. I'm not a heating engineer. There's just one thing that's going to be done -- you have a good Chief of Police -- Mr. Ryan -- capable, intelligent, courageous and experienced. You have 500 good men in the police department. They'll do as they're told to do. If there is good administration at the top, they'll administer well down to the bottom -- or else; they'll be disciplined. We are prepared to do just that. There isn't going to be any outside control; we're going to put an end to these ugly rumors that fill this city. And it may not be so popular with some people but it's what's going to be done.

I'll be very candid with you, I'd rather be right as your mayor for two years, and that's all the lease on life I have on political office, and there isn't even that much left now - a year and 8 months -- I'd rather at least be right in what I think to be right than to go along being a hypocrite about it, not speaking my mind on things I think need to be done and try to be re-elected and know that when I was reelected for the next two years, which is 4 years that I've been wrong all four years -- there isn't any fun in that. No fun in it at all. Life is too sweet, there are too many other opportunities than to go around messing your life up, trying to please some people who can never be pleased until they have the world with a fence around it. And there are some people that want just that. It's not going to be different. We're not in the business of dispensing special privileges for special people for special purposes on special occasions. We're in the business to give equal protection to all. Equal protection to you who need it and equal application to those who need it and I believe we're on the march. I do not say that we'll produce miracles -- it takes time, it'll

take a lot of time. Even after we went to war with Hitler it was 16 months before we won a battle. And don't lose faith -- it may take 16 months in this town before we win a major battle. But today I say that at least we've made strides forward and I can assure you that those strides will be ever maintained and when I ask for 40 additional officers in the Police Department I think it's the duty of Christian citizens to take at least a constructive point of view -- find out whether or not we have the number of men that we need and if we've haven't got it see to it that we get it. There are certain minimum services that every community needs -- good schools, good health programs, water, fire protection, and police protection -- those are the essential services of local government. When your Mayor and your Chief of Police, after consideration, and after examination and exploration point out the need I think we ought to have it. And I think we ought to have the backing of the good people of this community because you can rest assured that the other people are not going to back it. I can tell you that right now.

Well, now enough of that for city administration. Just let me conclude with this thought. That I'm convinced that the people of Minneapolis want a good future. They want to see industrial development; they want job opportunities; they want good schools; parks and playgrounds; they want good government. Good in all of its meaning. I think they want their governmental machinery modernized, the house of government to be put in order because if we're going to meet the problems of tomorrow we're going to have to have government that's capable of meeting them. And you can't meet the problems of the atomic age with what we call the machinery of the stone age. It can't be done. And the city government of the City of Minneapolis needs modernization. It needs to be modernized in terms of performing efficient service. Too many

loose boards and commissions, too much divided authority, too little of sound business administration is not good government. And as your Mayor I've made some proposals. And I'm willing to defend those proposals and to argue for them. It may not make me popular but I'll tell you this, that the people of Minneapolis sooner or later are going to have to face the problem of their government. They're going to have to face it like a doctor has to examine a patient and sooner or later we're going to be right up to the point where our financial structure is in such terrible condition and our political structure is so delapidated that we will not be able to master the problems of tomorrow. Why not put our house in order to meet the problems of tomorrow. Let's quit talking about the past, let's concentrate on today and that day after tomorrow. If we do that there's hope. From time to time I will be speaking to you on the radio, through the press, other people will be talking to you in your meetings and other places, on the radio, through the press and by private conversation about some of the things that need to be done in this our community. We start building a better world in our own little world and our own little world is in our home, in our backyard, our block and our city. I ask you to march with us on that program. 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