

ADDRESS DELIVERED BY MAYOR HUBERT H. HUMPHREY AT CHICAGO, ILLINOIS
AT CONVENTION OF NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF RETAIL DRUGGISTS - OCT. 14, 1947

MR. HUBERT H. HUMPHREY: Thank you very much. It is really a great tribute to have these fellow pharmacists all stand up--or did you just need the stretch? Although I can always tell when I am away from home, because back in Minneapolis when they stand up like that they leave the room, here you are still polite. I want to express my thanks to you and yours for the great Chicago hospitality and the reception which I have received thus far. I only hope it will keep up.

I have looked forward with a great deal of interest to this opportunity to talk to the forty-ninth annual convention of the National Association of Retail Druggists. I say that in all sincerity, because I don't know any profession or any business that is closer to my heart than the retail drug business. I still feel very much a part of it.

I don't think I have ever given a speech but that somewhere along the line I have mentioned the drug store of my father, who by the way is here with me and who says he is going to watch me and see that I behave. I'm watching him to see that he behaves. (Laughter)

I take a great deal of pride in knowing that in the city of Minneapolis, and in our sister city of St. Paul, the Twin Cities, some of my closest and dearest friends, and some of my best helpers in the job of civic development, are the members of the pharmacy profession. I know our old Dean Rodgers, at the School of Pharmacy at the University of Minnesota, is a grand and fine citizen and a real credit to the profession and to his academic life.

I have had a chance to visit with a number of you. I arrived here this morning after one of those new, fast plane rides that took us an hour and thirty-seven minutes to arrive from Minneapolis. At least if the speech

can be that short I suppose you will all be very happy. I will try to keep it within reasonable bounds; however, I haven't a thing to do between now and 6:45, and I thought we might just as well make an afternoon of it.
(Laughter)

I came along with a group of druggists, and I've never seen such an outfit in my life! They talked shop all the way here. I tried to get them into politics--I tried to talk about anything and everything except the drug store business--but I couldn't do it. When I arrived here I found representatives of many of the drug trade journals. I just met two of the representatives of DRUG TOPICS. I can remember that magazine so well! I used to read it, and was one of its avid readers when I was in the drug business with my father. I found many wonderful ideas in DRUG TOPICS.

Likewise, I have always read the NORTHWESTERN DRUGGIST. I get it in my office and I wouldn't want to leave out another publication that means very much to me, in fact I brought along a copy. It has John Dargavel's picture on the front cover. It's the MINNESOTA PHARMACIST. I saw Henry Moen up here snapping pictures; you know, he's the editor as well as the general manager for the Twin City Retail Druggists' Association. Of course, I read your own NARD JOURNAL. You might call it the Bible for retail druggists. It is the national publication, and I know it is edited by one of our great Minnesotans, a man of whom we are very proud, the former Governor of the State of Minnesota, Theodore B. Christianson. I understand that Governor Christianson was a boyhood friend of my father. How my dad turned out to be a Democrat and the other a Republican, I don't know. They must have quit speaking to each other.

I have some notes here, and I find that the only one apparently who didn't come from Minnesota is Mr. Kohl, the President of your Association. Possibly they had to have somebody to keep this thing on the beam, so they went to Ohio and grabbed a man. I have looked over many of the distinguished personalities here, and they are all from Minnesota. The editor of your NARD JOURNAL, your Executive Secretary--and of course I can't help but say a good word for some of my friends from Minnesota.

The first thing I asked when I came to the Sherman Hotel was, "Where is that Angus Taylor?" They said, "Mayor, you'll never find him. He used to live here, and you know what happens when a man lives here for a while." But I found Angus Taylor here; he is President of our Minnesota Farm Association.

I also know Mr. Oscar Nordstrum, President of the Twin Cities Retail Druggists Association, is here. I saw the whole clan here. They said, "Do you want us to give the Minnesota 'rouser'?" I said, "If you have to yell, give that and not the Bronx cheer." They promised me they would cooperate. So all the applause will be applause I brought with me. It's a little expensive, but it's safe that way. (Laughter)

Mr. Kohl, you bother me a bit. I came here to get away from politics. The first thing I hear is something about the Senate. Let's get this cleared up. All I am is the Mayor of Minneapolis. There are a few people talking about a lot of other things, and I tell them if they keep talking about it they will convince me, and then I'll be sorry. Then I come here and hear the same sort of talk.

Then he got around to ~~where~~ it was legitimate and he points out I am the Second Vice President in the Humphrey Drug Stores, Incorporated. I

am happy, but the Second Vice President is the guy who doesn't get any dividends. That is strictly an honorary position. My brother is the Treasurer and my dad is the President. You can see how I end up! I have all I can do to be in Minneapolis and hope things work out all right; but I do a little proselyting on the side for them--there's a lot of tourist business, and occasionally they wander out into the Dakotas. Wherever I go, I bring in my dad's drug store. We can use more business out there. If you are going through, stop in our new store and we'll give you good service. (Laughter)

I don't know how your life would read, or what kind of a story it would make, but I am pretty proud of some of the earlier days of my life. I had good guidance. I am proud of the fact that not only did I become a retail pharmacist, not only am I still a registered pharmacist--in fact, I pay up two years in advance for fear they may want to clip me off--but I was born above a drug store, and I was raised inside a drug store. I think that has been one of the most helpful factors in my whole life, to have had a chance literally to grow up inside a drug store.

You see, two sons are in our family. My dad made up his mind, with the drug hours as they were, that he could not be with us on the outside, so he had us with him on the inside. How he ever made any money under those circumstances I'll never know, and undoubtedly he will never know what went on, nor will we tell him. We won't disillusion him even at this time.

I speak to you as a fellow pharmacist. I can remember when I was studying the National Formulary and Pharmacopoeia, and I knew all the incompatible salus, and I really knew that when I took the State Board. I was scared stiff if I didn't know it the boys would catch up with me. I can remember about cannabis sativa consisting of the flowering tops of the pistillate plants. I can remember about venenosum, "Bring 'em here and we will dose 'em."

(Laughter) I remember tincture of camphor, p.b.c.o., and so on. It was in the early New Deal, if you know what I mean. They really started something then.

Likewise, I can remember, as a boy, going around to the drug store at the age of eleven. I was given the opportunity to take inventory back in the proprietary section. I can still see that Minneapolis Drug Company catalogue with a blue cover, and I can still see the prices listed on it--49 cents a dozen. We sold it for 50 cents and we didn't have the cut rate in those days. We got a little discount if we paid up within thirty days. The trouble was that out our way we had a tough time paying up in thirty days.

I can remember the drop shipments we used to get, and I can remember the fast salesmen who padded the orders once in a while. I can remember all those new fancy products. If this room were filled with salesmen today I would pay them a great compliment. I think the drug salesman is one of the greatest assets to the retail pharmacy business of any person who calls on the profession. He brings new ideas, a new zest for the business, messages of good cheer and of greeting from the fellows down the road that you are so busy you don't get a chance to see.

That retail pharmaceutical salesman is a very special friend of every man in the drug business. Those detail fellows who come through always have some new fluid extract or elixir or tincture. You already have a half bottle on the shelf; he comes in with a new one, and the doctors in town start writing new prescriptions and then you can't sell the other ones. That's why we have to get so much for our prescriptions. We even want the

folks on the outside to know that once in a while. We have to do well when we fill one. Thank goodness, pharmacy today has made a determined effort to get back into professional standards and maintain them.

I am one of those young men who believes you can have what you might call a modern drug store--a highly competitive modern merchandising drug store, with everything from soup to nuts (and we even have nuts), and at the same time maintain a professional attitude and a professional set of standards.

After all, all we mean by that is doing whatever you do, well, and giving quality and giving good service, and making an art out of whatever business it may be. You can run a luncheonette on a professional set of standards. You can handle a candy counter in exactly the same way. To my mind, there is nothing incompatible with a neat, modern, up-to-date drug store that has within it an open prescription case which is no longer the blighted area or slum district of the drug store which it has been in the dark, deep past; but to have a modern, up-to-date prescription department on one hand, with neat, snappy, modern merchandising facilities up and down the aisle.

I have seen those drug stores all over America. I am like the postman who goes on a vacation--every time he takes a vacation he visits post offices. On my vacations I visit drug stores without exception. The first place I stop when I go into a town is a drug store. I have seen some of my friends' stores in Litchfield and Belgrade and Montevideo, Minnesota. I have been in those stores. I like to see what they are doing and how they are getting along. I like to see whether they have a soda fountain or whether they don't. I like to see whether or not they are still staying open all night. I find they have learned a lot in these last few years, even

how to close the door and go home and see their wives--and they're still making a little money. That is highly commendable. I wish it were true in politics. (I'll work on it.)

My topic for today is "A Friend of the People." I come today as a fellow pharmacist and as your friend. Again I repeat that I cherish the friends I have in this profession. I cherish them because to me they represent the best cross-section of a community. They are neither, on the one side, big business, nor, on the other side, are they 100 per cent organized labor. In other words, they represent a middle ground of America --and if America needs anything these days, it needs a middle ground. It needs to know where it is going.

I am one of those persons in political life who believes there is lots of room down the highway of American democracy. I don't think you have to dirty yourselves in the gutters of the Left or the gutters of the Right. I don't think you have to get down into the slime and the dirt of totalitarianism, whether it be on the left side of the street with communism or on the right side of the street with fascism.

We in this nation of ours have spent 175 years trying to build a great highway, a great thoroughfare, of American democratic living; and, thank goodness, we made the progress we have, because if there ever was a time when the world needed a rock of faith, if there ever was a time we needed a mooring place, a port, it is now. That great rock of faith for hungry people, for freedom-loving people, that great rock of faith for people just like those gathered in this room who at one time were just little people, striving to make something out of their little lives, that rock of faith is the United States of America--and we have an awfully big job taking

care of it.

I am going to talk to you about that, because I think you have something to say about it.

My topic, I said, is "A Friend of the People." What do I mean by that? Most people come to you and have a topic and never talk on it. I've done that, too. This time I am going to try to talk to the topic.

I say you are a friend of the people because you live with them. You are not in the ivory towers--you are not back in some great, big managerial office--you are not hiding away in some secluded place. You are right on Main Street; you are in the middle of the block or on the corner. You meet the American people as they are. You meet them when they are not cleanly shaven; you meet the housewife when she comes in wearing a wrap-around and rushes in to pick up a few commodities for the home. You meet the children of America.

I suppose there is no commodity in the United States that meets more children than the corner drug store. To me it means you must make up your mind that you have to be a friend of the people. You are in politics up to your ears. I am not talking about party politics. Some of you may even be in that. To me politics is the art and science of government. To me politics, according to the old Greek definition, is nothing more or less than the business of the community. And my! how you are tied up in the business of the community!

People not only come to the druggist these days to ask for a box of aspirin tablets, or Nature's Remedy or, spelled backwards, Serutan--they not only come to you to get the little "pill that will", or for information on how to cure a cold--and I'll see one of you later, because I've had a cold for a long time and I have never dared prescribe for myself. People

not only come to you asking for that kind of advice, saying, "Which tooth pasteshall I buy? Which mouth wash should I use?", and they not only come to you with the doctor's prescription and actually go behind the prescription counter, as they do in many smaller towns and communities where the business relationships are more intimate, and saying, "Do you really think this will do the job?", but I say it frankly, without any discredit to the medical profession, that there are thousands of Americans today who go into the drug store with a prescription and who trust their druggist if not more than they trust their doctor.

It is a great tribute to you, but it imposes a tremendous responsibility. They come to you with all sorts of questions. I know there are men and women here who have been asked very intimate questions about personal hygiene, personal physical health or the family situation--some trouble with the son or daughter or family, or the relatives have moved in and stayed too long, and "Can you find us a house? We thought they'd stay a week, and they've been here for two years!" I'll bet there are many of you here who have heard people say, "I have to file my income tax return. I see they have an investigation." Let me tip you off--they always have an investigation on--don't think they don't! They have one going on all the time.

These ordinary people of your community, that live and work with you and depend upon you, and know you are going to be open a little earlier and just a little later than anybody else on the street, they hang around and stand by the magazine rack for a long time, and when you are all alone they sneak back and say, "Look--you know, I think I'm in a little trouble," and they want your advice. You have had it happen to you. I have, and I know people I have been associated with have had it happen to them.

That imposes upon every pharmacist, upon every person who works in the drug store or the retail pharmacy, a great citizenship. I say you

owe an obligation to the society of which you are very much an integral part. You owe an obligation not only to conduct your business within the law--and that is very important these days--you owe an obligation not only to practice fair trade (which I hope you all do)--you owe an obligation not only to uphold the ethical standards of your profession, but you owe an obligation to become well-informed American citizens, walking encyclopedias, if you please, walking bureaus of information, with honest information. If you can't give it as you think to be honest, then say, "This is only my point of view."

I want to make a confession right now. Whatever I may have to say to you may not be the truth, but it is my point of view, and thank goodness in America we still have a right to express our point of view.

Long before we had freedom in the marketplace, ladies and gentlemen, we had freedom of competition of ideas. We had freedom of thinking. That makes possible free economic systems. Freedom of thinking makes possible free political systems, and freedom of thinking has within itself, obviously, the quality of error or of mistake. You owe that obligation to yourself and to your Association and to your neighbors, always to keep in mind that you are not infallible, that you are not a paragon of virtue or of wisdom, that all you are doing is venting your own personal opinion for the purposes of whatever it may serve.

I wish all of us in public life could keep that in mind, too. Once a man gets into public office he begins to think he has all the answers--and all too often even people in public office refuse or, through some strange set of circumstances, never get to talk to their people. They talk to just a few of the people, the ones they want to talk to, the ones who

will say nice things to them.

I pride myself on having a set of friends who are brutal in their treatment of me. I very seldom receive a compliment, and I consistently receive what I consider to be constructive criticism. If they will only be that way for the next ten or fifteen years I might amount to something, and anyone else can enjoy the same beautiful experience. There is nothing quite so insidious as self-pride and vanity, and there is nothing that will destroy you quite so quickly as the person who is not a critic--a constructive critic--the kind of friend who seems to say that everything you do is perfect. That just isn't true.

Yes, I said the drug store gave me preparation for what I wanted to do. I spent a little time at the university, some seven years. I have gone through the whole rigamarole from top to bottom. I was an administrator with WPA and I had a wonderful experience there, too. I met a lot of people on the other side of the tracks, plain, ordinary people who were considered to be the unemployables and undesirables of America.

I want to leave this thought with my friends in business, that those so-called unemployables and undesirables, those relievers of the '30s, were the men and women and fathers and mothers who in many instances produced the men who carried the guns in the '40s. They were the same people in their filling up of production shops with labor to make America the arsenal of democracy. Hasn't it been a grave revelation to see that when a country is at work what people can do, when opportunity is made available what a tremendous drive this nation has! It was less than ten years ago that we were in a recession. Your business was literally collapsing. Today--my

goodness, we are driving ahead with an energy that is unbelievable! We have literally performed miracles!

Well, the drug store helped me get these observations. It conditioned me for the kind of job I have today, because I am in that kind of job, just as you are. I am still selling something. I am trying to sell ideas. Maybe I am trying to sell leadership, and you yourselves give leadership. When you are a good merchandiser in the town, you are giving leadership to the community. That is why the retail businessman in America, the fellow meeting the trade, the person working with his people, is a natural-born American leader. He is being experienced, conditioned, developed every day. When you are in the tough battle of free enterprise competition, you have to know what you are doing. You have to be on your toes. That prepares you for the rough-and-tumble of politics.

By the way, politics can be a bit rough-and-tumble at times. I love it as much as I love tramping behind a drug store counter looking for those nickles, taking the customer count, having the leaders you didn't make much profit on, hoping if you got them in the store you could make enough money on them by the time they got out so you could exist. I hope you haven't forgotten those days; I haven't. In one sense they really ferreted out those who could survive; they put the test to all of us; they made us use every bit of our initiative and ingenuity.

Good preparation for political life is this great business of pharmacy. Maybe I will encourage some of you to run for office. I understand a lot of pharmacists have run for office and have been successful. I hope more of you will do it.

These are very difficult and uncertain and troublesome days. I don't think I need to emphasize that statement. Possibly we need to put it in the vernacular of the retail pharmacist: Let's take inventory for a while. Some of you do it once a month, twice a year, once a year, and I hope all of you do it at least that often. America needs to take inventory every so often, and I think we need to take it a little more often these days than we used to, because things are moving at a greater pace in this 20th Century since World War II.

We need to take inventory of the kind of society that most of the people in this room have been reared in. For thirty years, since 1917, this world of ours has been in a dramatic evolution, in some instances a violent revolution, and, call it what you will, there has been a dynamic change since 1917 and World War I. I suppose there are those in the room who can very well remember those almost stable days, those days when you could look a bit to the future and almost plan on it back in the early 1900's. Of course, there have never been any of the "good old days." Those are always better when you are away from them. My grandfather on my mother's side used to tell about the snowstorm in 1896. Every time he told it the snow got a foot deeper.

We will always have people who will want to go back somewhere. They want to go back to that beautiful era in which they once lived. The point is that they are just selecting certain things. There are some fifty- or sixty-year-olds who would like to go back to when they were 20, but not for business purposes. (Laughter) There are some people who are fifty years of age and who would like to go back to the time they were thirty or thirty-five, because maybe they had a little

more zip-and-go in terms of their business enterprise. They could be on the job a little longer, with more zest.

Ladies and gentlemen, we are not going back anywhere. We needn't quibble about it. Here we are right now, October 14, 1947, and whatever we have is what we have today and what we are going to have tomorrow. The man today in business or in public life, or whatever his economic picture or his occupation may be, has an obligation not to be dreaming about some beautiful day in the bygone past, but to be thinking about the hard, stark realities of today and what they offer, and he must plan a bit for tomorrow.

That is the future. The future belongs to those people. The future belongs to the people who have faith in themselves today and confidence in tomorrow--people who have their feet on the ground and who know where they are standing; but their heads are in the clouds so they can get a vision of the horizon. Too many people have their heads down between their legs, trying to look backwards. There is no going backwards at all.

I think we need an elementary course in Economics in America. You can't fight two world wars, ladies and gentlemen, and come out of them unscarred. I submit to this audience that the United States of America in these two world wars was the only nation that was not bombed of all the allies, the only nation that never suffered physical property damage with the exception of our outlying possessions.

We are having to do our suffering in some other ways, and yet there is a strange situation which has developed. You would think both world wars in one generation would have drained the strength of America;

but they didn't. They gave us strength. You see, during the period of the war we get rid of a lot of nonsensical notions. We get rid of the idea that some people can't work and some can work. We get rid of the idea that some people are so much smarter than others, and that some are smarter and others are dumber. We say everybody has to go to work, and we give every man his place and say, "Go to it!" Boy! when we say "Go to it" we really go!

We came out of World War I. Before World War I we were a debtor nation; today we are the greatest creditor nation in the world. Just before World War I we were a nation that was not exporting as much as we imported. By the time World War I was over, we were the greatest exporting nation in the world. We started out a second-rate power and ended as the greatest industrial power in the world.

Before World War II the highest production was 90 billion dollars a year in total gross product for America as of 1940. We had 8 million people unemployed. That was one political charge which was made in the 1940 campaign which was definitely true. There were 9 million people unemployed in America in 1940. Do you know what has happened? We have 60 million gainfully employed workers in America today, more than at any other time in the history of modern civilization. We have a total national product for 1947 of a minimum of 225 billion dollars. Our 1940 price levels would be equivalent to 167 billion dollars. Think of it! We have doubled the output, the effort, the volume of sales in goods and services in America in less than seven years!

War released that power. I am not advocating war—I am simply saying that during the period of war we get busy and put people to work on the democratic principle of every man having a job to do, everybody

having something he can contribute to society.

But war leaves something else, too! It leaves us with debts. Debts have to be paid in a credit economy, and this is a credit economy and it always will be and always has been. We have 250 billion dollars in national indebtedness. We have a tremendous pent-up demand for goods. We are in the spiral of inflation today, gentlemen. May I point a tribute to my friends in the retail pharmacy business: You have not only been great patriots in war, as you were, but in my opinion without doubt you are the finest patriots of peace, because the price structure in the retail pharmacy business has been kept at an even keel, at a more constant level than in any other type of American business. (Applause)

That means a lot, and it is going to mean something to you in your inventory, and it is going to mean something to that person who comes into your store. He will remember it. He will remember that, by and large, the prices didn't double on ordinary stable commodities. You can still get a good box of aspirin tablets for ten cents, and another good brand for 15 cents, and even some for 5 cents. There will be a lot of headaches unless we sell people cheap aspirin.

Yes, the inventory we are taking is more than just an American inventory. Wendell Wilkie told the American people something they needed to be told more often. Jesus of Nazareth said it two thousand years ago, and Christopher Columbus said it in 1492, "This is one world."

Whether you like it or not, it is one world. You can't argue about it any more. Of course, most of us went to school when they had flat maps, and we thought everything pointed to the United States, that we were in the garden spot and everything emanated from us. But the

world is round, and we must think in those terms.

Likewise, we have to remember that communications cut down distance. If it isn't one world politically, it is one world economically. The humanitarian impulses aren't going to permit other people to starve and face famine. We are the most generous people in the world; whether we give under one plan or another, we are going to give; and all over Europe and Asia there is chaos, catastrophe, destruction, starvation, malnutrition, all the things you and I know of.

Those people are God's children—believe me, they are—and I submit to you that you cannot ignore the basic spiritual lessons that you took to yourselves as children or as adults. You can't ignore those things in your business or in your citizenship. You just can't do it! You just can't have spiritual idealism on Sunday and sordid materialism the other six days of the week, because it won't add up. We found that out.

If you remember nothing else out of what I am saying today, remember that. You are your brother's keeper, whether you want to be or whether you don't. Nobody asks you—you just are. We have the greatest obligation ever placed upon a people. Much has been given unto us, and much is going to be expected of us. We were a little people who grew to be great people. We were a little country that became a great nation. We are the great dream of western civilization, and today we have within our power the ability to make this world all over again; or, if we don't do the things we ought to do, we have it within our power to go down in history as a people who had everything to do with except the courage and the moral attitude to do the job. I want to see us do the job, because I am afraid, gentlemen, that if we don't do it somebody else will.

Industrialism has come into being, as has urbanism. We are no

longer a nation of people living on farms in small hamlets. Seventy per cent of our people live in big cities today. This is a nation of factory workers, shop workers, wage earners. May I inject this: It is to your advantage to have people receive good wages. You can't make money out of paupers, remember that. There is no profit in an impoverished community. You are not going to be able to do business with just those who clip coupons; there aren't enough such people. There aren't enough coupons to go around. They don't have any more headaches than others, and they don't become in need of cathartics any quicker than the rest, either.

I put it directly to you: Your friends in your community are the average run of people who walk up and down the streets, who go to the grocery store, the meat market, the delicatessen, the dime store and the 25-cent movie and the local filling station. They are your friends, and it is to your advantage to see that they have an opportunity to live the good life, else you will not be able to live it either. That is why I say you are a friend of the people.

More than that, the people surely are your friends because you can't live without them. You have to have mass sales. I read the DRUG JOURNAL, THE MINNESOTA PHARMACIST, NORTHWESTERN DRUGGIST, DRUG TOPICS. I hear about mass merchandising and volume of sales. How are you going to get volume of sales unless you have volumes of people with ample purchasing power in their pockets to make those sales? Figure that one out!

You can't have prosperity on \$15 a week pay envelope. It isn't possible. Sooner or later you will be right with them. Your credit may

be a little better momentarily, your wholesale houses may carry you along because they have been working with you for years and you have been working with them, yes; your banker may have a little more faith in you because you wear a white collar and you have a big house and there's only a first mortgage on it, not a second; but sooner or later it will catch up with you.

So I say that surely if there is any group of people in America that have a stake in a wide distribution of purchasing power in the American public, it is the retail business man and particularly the retail pharmacist. Listen! People will go to the grocery store before they will come to you, because if it's a choice between taking care of a headache or an empty stomach, they will take care of the empty stomach. It is up to you to have that little excess and see that that excess is where it will bring you good business.

What are some of the other postwar facts we need to think about? This inventory we need to add up. There are a few things in American life you and I have to be interested in.

As a public official I see these things. I see, for example, some of the American cities having a crime wave. That is not good for America, and I submit to every retail pharmacist, to every business man in this country, that he has more at stake in clean, honest government than any other single individual. He has more at stake in efficient, modern government than any other single individual.

You are taxpayers--you are property owners--you ought to be able to get the most out of your tax dollar. Economy in government doesn't mean spending little--it means spending well what you have, spending it wisely and prudently, and it is up to the pharmacist and his friends along Main

Street, his business associates and his neighbors who come into his store --it is up to them to see that their instrumentalities, institutions of government, are modern and well equipped to do the job you call upon them to do.

I am speaking about local government as well as state and national government. Some of us forget local government. Let me give a passing thought on that:

I have heard so many fine business people talk about crooked politics. Well, there are some, but let me tell you a secret: There are a few crooked business men, too! There are a few labor racketeers, too! There are a few rascals in any type of occupation. There are even a few renegade ministers at times, and certainly some renegade teachers. They've been working on Ivory Soap for some 100 years and still it's only 99.44 per cent pure. (Laughter)

Your local government has a lot to do with the pattern of national and international government. Listen! If you can't keep a local politician honest at home, how are you going to keep him honest in Washington when he is 2,000 miles away from you? Figure that one out! We say, "Lady, all men are alike when they're away from home." I'm glad so many wives came along to this convention. (Laughter)

We start building the kind of America we want not down in Washington, but in our own home town, because that is where we have something to say about government. There is where your own personality can be effective, right in your own home town. You won't be called to the United Nations, many of you; you won't have a chance to get hold of these people and see

whether or not you can work things out. However, you will have a chance to build a set of attitudes, a set of basic traditions and institutions at the home level right where you live. That is democracy.

I look upon local politicians and local government as the laboratory --the incubator--of democracy; and if you can't keep that incubator clean, if you can't perform honest experiments in that laboratory, you will not be able to produce an honest product. That is one of the reasons why I like to be in local government. I have never claimed we produce miracles, but I enjoy it and I am of the opinion that we need hundreds and hundreds of people who are willing to make the sacrifice to go into public life, not necessarily to elective positions but sometimes just administrative or appointive positions, civil service positions--people who are not the second-class citizens in terms of their capacity or ability or intelligence, but top-grade citizens.

You need to encourage them, because whether you like it or not, ladies and gentlemen, government is here to stay, and big government is here and it's here to stay. I don't care whether the Republicans are in or the Democrats are in--you are going to have lots of people on the public payroll, and they are going to make all kinds of rules and regulations; they are going to pass all kinds of ordinances, statutes and laws, and you'd better make up your mind you have an interest in government because, believe me, government has an interest in you! If you don't think so, see the Collector of Internal Revenue and you'll find out. (Laughter)

Government is your partner. Government can be a good partner or a bad partner, a helpful partner or a corrupt partner; it can be the helping hand and the Good Samaritan or it can be the thing that will drag you down. Therefore, I ask you and I encourage you to take an active interest and

become informed and intelligent rounded citizens, oriented to the life of your community, to the problems of your nation; and if possible, have at least a glimpse of what is going on on a world-wide basis. That inventory tells me there's a lot going on, too!

Here is a nation rich and fat. Here we are, and yet we can't find houses for people to live in. I ask in all candidness, and I've been asking this for two years: Can you give me one honest reason (you can give me lots of rationalizations) or one honest explanation of why America, which was able to arm an army and navy of 15 million men, give away 50 billion dollars in Lend-Lease, spend 400 billion dollars on war, build a navy bigger than the combined navies of the world in a period of three years, establish war plants, war housing, shipyards, do all that in a period of less than three years AND during a war-- and here it is two years after the war and we can't build houses for the men whomade America safe and free? Give me the answer. There is no answer except greed, none other.

You know I am telling you the truth, as surely as you are gathered in this room. If we could manage things so that men could be trained and housed as quickly as they died for democracy and freedom, then I wonder how about giving them a chance to live for it! You are developing a lot of citizens these days. (Applause)

I don't like controls any more than the rest of you. I don't like dictation, no matter where it comes from. I don't like to be bossed by my wife, much less be bossed by government; but I know this postwar period is still not a peaceful period. We are not out of the war, ladies and gentlemen, and you know it. This war will never be over until every person ever involved in it has a chance to live as if he had never gone to war.

This war will never be over until business opportunities again are opened up to every person who would to go into it, until the economy is given

the chance to stabilize itself, to level off--until the wounds of the war have been healed; as old Abe Lincoln said, "Bind up the wounds." "With malice toward none and charity toward all--with firmness in the right as God gives us to see the right."

When we have that situation then we can really say the war is over. It took us a long time to get mad enough and crazy enough and to get our society totally maladjusted sufficiently to go to war. This war didn't start just because of a mad paperhanger. You and I have to find out what caused that mad paperhanger. What kind of society produced that barbarian? Once we find that out and cure those economic and political evils, then we will be living in that peaceful society that you and I think about. It will be a big job, there will be plenty of work for your sons and daughters and their children; there is a lot of unfinished business in the way of a free life.

If you look around you will see we have threats--and I said a while ago that America has a great responsibility--oh, a great, tremendous responsibility these days. Why? You believe in competition. Every business man believes in that. There is not only competition in the economic field, but also in the political field--real competition. There is competition between ways of life, just as there is competition between the way you merchandise and manage your business. I don't expect every country to be just like America --I don't expect every drug store to be just like another. Wouldn't that be too bad!

One of the things I like about little private enterprise, that little entrepreneur who owns his own store, is that when you look at it you see him; you see his own personality in it. He builds it according to the community and according to his own background and his own experience. With all candor I say that one of the great challenges to the big chain organization is the injecting of local personality, individual personality, into a man's own little business

enterprise, getting away from the stereotype.

I don't want to see one world where everybody wears the same kind of clothes and the same kind of hats. One of the ladies may decide upon the wrong style, and that would be too bad. No--I like to see room for diversity and differences of opinion. I submit that there is a contest in the world between different philosophies of life. We are not going to win that contest by just sitting back and saying, "Haha, you can't catch me!"

I saw a lot of private merchants who said that when the first chain stores came in. They found out, and then they got busy. They cleaned out the old apple barrel; they brushed up the basement; they repainted, put neon lights out front and went to work. They haven't been driven out of business; as a matter of fact, they have made it a little uncomfortable at times for so-called big outfits.

By the same token I have watched big organizations inject local personality into their stores which has made them just that much stronger. There is competition in the ways of life these days. You see it in Europe and you see some of the end products of it even in our own midst. We thought we killed Fascism and Hitlerism. All we did was to kill Fascists and Hitlerites. Some of their ideas are still alive, such as the idea that there are certain people who are sub-human, inferior, superior; the idea that there are certain people who have all infinite wisdom and so they are going to direct your lives--and then you see, on the other hand, people who believe they have a Utopia, a political Utopia. We are watching that in Europe today.

Gentlemen, I submit to you that I have no time nor desire to be any part nor to have any affiliation with either philosophy. Dictatorship, whether of the proletariat or of the elite, is still dictatorship. A concentration camp is a concentration camp, whether in Silesia or Saxony or Bavaria or Siberia. It is still a concentration camp. A police state is a police state, and a Gestapo is still a Gestapo. I want no part of it.

I submit that if the head of democratic freedom is today the United States of America and we are in a battle--not a battle of bullets but a battle of ideas--if we don't win that battle of ideas we will be in a battle of bullets. It is imperative that we win the battle of ideas. We can, because we have the ideas.

In order to do this it requires several things: We need a strong economy at home to develop our own natural resources. If you are going to a hospital to give a blood transfusion you want to be sure you eat well before and after you go. You can't go and be a walking blood bank day after day if you are going to be a victim of malnutrition. America cannot be the democratic blood bank of the world, on the one hand, helping out other people, and likewise letting her own economy collapse. It can't be done. That is why I have been alarmed by high prices and what I see in speculative enterprise.

I am alarmed when I see in the Dakotas the tremendous inflation in land values, when I see farmland values within 5 per cent of their peak of 1920, because I know what happened in those areas of America in the 1920's. I know the bank failures, I know the farmers that were liquidated and the mortgage foreclosures. I say America can't afford that. She can't afford that extravagance because we are fighting for our way of life. We are fighting for the right now as Vishinsky and Gromyko battle with Secretary Marshall. We are fighting as the Marshall Plan is being introduced in Europe and as the establishment of the Comintern comes.

This is a confession: I have never been known to be a Red-baiter. Some people have thought I was a little on the "pink" side, but when it comes to a fundamental test of whether or not democracy is going to survive--free speech, free press, freedom to worship and express myself--whether or not I am going to live in a society half-slave and half-free, I say it is high time

we made up our minds that maybe by a little work like the Good Samaritan did, knowing where we are going and what we want, and programming and planning the job, we can save 20 million dead or maybe the break-up of civilization, because World War III is not going to be won. No one will win that one. World War III will be world collapse and world catastrophe.

Maybe this convention ought to give a little time to radioactive clouds, bacteriological warfare, atomic bombs. They tell me the atomic bombs at Nagasaki and Hiroshima are like lady-finger firecrackers. They only killed 500,000 people per bomb. No, we can't afford that kind of extravagance.

We are fighting today for the right to live as a free people. You have something to say about that. This isn't going to be decided by the Secretary of State--it is going to be decided by millions and millions of American people who are willing to make certain sacrifices, who are willing to view this thing objectively and honestly, who will not be like ostriches and stick their heads in the sand. They will recognize there is a real storm in this world, and that the only way you can meet it is to face into it and have courage and set your sails and steer your course rather than trying to hide out somewhere hoping it will pass you by. It won't happen that way.

I say we need to be strong at home. That means the development of our human resources. Do you know what is happening today in America? There are six million boys and girls in America from five to seventeen who are not in public schools because America, in its richest year of history, cannot keep its public schools open. Think of that, ladies and gentlemen! The future citizens of this nation, the adults who in another generation will be running America and determining its policy, being committed to a program of ignorance because of the indifference and the apathy of the adult citizens of America!

America spent 20 billion dollars last year on alcohol, cosmetics and general entertainment. We spent 3 billion dollars on public education. Don't tell me that when our national income has increased 500 percent since 1932, and expenditures for public education have only gone up 25 percent, that we can't afford more for public education!

I want every retail pharmacist in America to become a crusader of one for public education for American boys and girls, to give them the greatest opportunity for a democratic experience they have ever had in their home town! We ought to have that kind of an America. (Applause)

I have done a lot of work with school teachers and school board members. I tell them to convert the American schools into community centers. Those schools belong to all the people, not to the superintendent of the school board. We paid for them--they are ours. If we need a place to get together--and we do, you know--we could use the schoolhouse.

Boys and girls, men and women need space. Do you know what we are doing today in urban civilization? We are crowding everybody in on top of everybody until we suffer from claustrophobia. We become frustrated and at times we see this develop into a type of mental and social behavior which you and I recognize as being not quite normal.

What Americans need today is an opportunity for wholesome recreation, an opportunity to live and let live. As I say, whether a little private house is economically sound for everybody, it is socially sound, I'll tell you that. If you are going to have a family fight there's nothing like having one all by yourselves without the neighbors being in on it. It is so much better for everybody. Then you can really fight and don't have to pull your punches. If you are going to bring up a family, it is better to bring them up as your family and not as a sort of community project.

I ask one other thing of this great assembly here today, because you represent a cross-section of America and you are from all the states in the Union. I ask this of you: Let's forget this depression period of ours as a sort of guide. I have been reading government facts and statistics recently. A few years ago, when I was at the University, we used to have as the index period the years from 1926 to 1929. Then we got into the index period from 1935 to 1937, and now we have an index period of 1935 to 1939. In other words, everything we do in America today is judged on the standard of what happened from 1935 to 1939. I told the Secretary of Agriculture at a meeting I attended with him one evening, "I don't like that." (I should have been a little more diplomatic.)

"Why not?"

"I remember 1935 to 1939. I didn't like that period. It wasn't good. I remember it very well. I remember the dust storms, the grasshoppers, the price of wheat, the retail sales. I can remember trying to count out what little cash we had in the cash register. Don't tell me that is the kind of picture I ought to have as a standard for America, and that I should judge everything by 1935 to 1939."

We can't think in terms of that dismal, dark past. What America needs today is to remember that the economics of scarcity is no longer permissible. We can't be thinking about how we can do less and get more. We must think of how we can do more and give more. We have to be thinking of production--the production of goods and services. That goes for business management; it goes for labor.

I was at the national A F of L convention in San Francisco just last week, and I told 700 top labor leaders of this nation just what I am telling you right now; If you have some bad boys in your organization, clean them out! If you need to clean up your store, do it now, and do it by yourself, before some-

body else has to do it. If you have a program that is committed to scarcity, get rid of it--because America today must have people in business management who are willing to invest and take a chance and move ahead, and people who are working who not only want the 40-hour week but who want to work 40 hours a week. There's a lot of difference, you know. (Applause)

May I just say they applauded, too. I hope they believe it and I hope you do, too, because I am dead serious about it.

We can't go around thinking about depression economics. We are living in a new day and a new era, and we have to think about it right now, as it really is.

How do we do all of these things I have been talking about? By the way, let me say this so we clear the record: I feel, politically speaking, that I am an internationalist. I support with all of my soul, heart and energy the Marshall Plan for Europe. I support it not because I want to see America pour out its dollars into some sort of lost cause, but because I think it is not a lost cause. We have to help, because I think we are going to need friends--because I think we have a moral obligation--and because I think it is good business. You can't do business with people who have no business, and because I feel if we are to protect our way of life we had better do it.

How do we need these things? I wrote a speech some time ago for druggists, on Salesmanship. The first thing I said was that there are some basic fundamental rules which apply in all fields of selling, all fields of competition. What is the first one? Have a knowledge of your product and a confidence in its quality. That means having a thorough understanding of its utility and what it will do.

When you are selling a product in your drug store you have a knowledge of it. One of the reasons I was told to go to pharmacy school was so that when I took the patent medicine off the shelf I could explain the label. The people stand there with awe and say, "Give it to me."

"\$1.35, please," and you wrap it up and they take it home. You know your product. (Laughter)

Now we need to know our product. I am talking about the product of America. We need to know about it. What do we need to know? We need to know that America is more than a dollar sign. America has had the only new idea in politics in 2,000 years, since the Sermon on the Mount. We need to know that this country of ours has a militant political philosophy, just as militant and just as dynamic as any old philosophy ever talked about, whether it came from the Communist manifesto or Mein Kampf or something else. We have really got it.

We have to have faith. Old Tom Jefferson said it, and he wasn't so old, either; he was 28 when he said it: "We hold these truths to be self-evident." No argument about it. He said, "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."

We need to believe it, and we need to believe and know why it is the best and why it works so well. There is the answer to the productivity of America. There is the answer to this great family of people we have, because we have treated people as Bobby Burns, the poet, said, "A man's a man for a' that." We have treated them within the spirit of a Christian ethic. We have given them Christian personalities; we have given the chance for the little man to become a great man, the fellow who works in the mine pit to become a foreman, and we have held open the avenues of opportunity in America.

I say we have to have a knowledge of our product, confidence in its quality, confidence that despite all the mistakes we make in American government, as Teddy Roosevelt once said, if he had his choice, knowing what he did of all the mistakes made in representative government, he would trust the majority of the people's decision more than any one selected minority. I believe that, too.

I think the majority will make fewer mistakes over the long run than any finely selected minority.

There are no philosopher kings. Plato wanted one in his Republic, but he never found him. That was a phantasy, a dream. There are no philosopher kings. If there can be maybe we could give all power to him; but as long as there isn't, the only thing we can do is to have government by the consent of the governed, which is representative government as we know it in America. That means respect, abiding by majority rule, and respect for minority rights.

In America today we have a problem on our hands, and again I am dreadfully sincere. I worry about this. For example, we can't go to Vishinsky or Molotov, on the one hand, as Secretary Jimmy Byrnes did, and complain about the freedom of elections in Bulgaria, saying, "I didn't like what went on over there."

I am one of those young Americans protesting to high heaven in speeches and on the radio. We can't go with clean hands when we don't permit freedom of elections in Georgia and South Carolina. There are a lot of reasons, and a lot of people will say the Negroes are not prepared for it; but we had better see that they are soon prepared for it, because there are 15 or 16 million of them in America and we can't afford to have second-class citizenship for 16 million Americans, nor can we afford to be consumed by the venom and the hate of race prejudice. And boy, do we have it! You know it and I know it. In my town we are fighting that battle, and we are fighting it hard.

I know we need the loyalty and devotion of every American, whether he be Jew or Gentile, Protestant or Catholic, whatever he may be, as the great Paul of the Scriptures said: "Ye are neither Jew nor Gentile; ye are neither bond nor free; ye are all one." I believe it and as long as I believe it I am going to fight for it! (Applause)

Another thing I said in this merchandising talk to a group of retail pharmacists in Minneapolis was this: Have a knowledge of your community and of the buying habits of your customers. You see, that is what we are talking about in America. We call it a free enterprise system, or a private enterprise system. It is an American enterprise system. We built this thing our own way, and we didn't even plan it--we just built it. It just came along, like Topsy. Maybe that is why it isn't so pretty some days, but it's our baby and we love it, and we are going to take care of it.

We must have a knowledge of this America of ours, with all of its dynamic potentialities, all its little sins. Even though I may say some sharp things today and be critical, I am not pessimistic. After all, the Lord's Prayer keeps talking about heaven on earth. I say that in all reverence. That surely isn't here, yet some of us continue to say the Lord's Prayer. Some of us continue to recite some of the psalms of the great poets and prophets. I say when we know our community we have to know all about America--we have to know about its strength and its weaknesses, and we have to know about the buying habits of our customers.

I think there are too many people running for political office, too many people lecturing the American people, who can't break this thing down so American people can understand it. If the American people, for example, could understand what our foreign policy is and should be--if they could understand it--if we had people who could explain it so they could understand it--they would respond. They will always respond to justice and the right thing.

We are basically a decent people. We have a few "bad apples", but you can get rid of them. We need to know the buying habits of America; we need to know the political habits of America. One of the things I found out about the political habits of America, which I don't think some of the old-time politicians have found out, is that the best politics in America is honest politics. (Applause)

I don't want you to think I haven't made a lot of mistakes. I have. I have made some terrible mistakes, and I repent of them. Every time I have made one it never hurt anyone half as much as it hurt me. I mean in every walk of life--personally, politically, going around and making foolish statements about everybody who opposes you, getting personal and downright indecent and nasty, is not good politics in America. The American people don't like it. (Applause)

You and I can disagree on issues--on the Marshall Plan, on social security, indeed in labor management, but that is no reason for either you or for me to become personal, to become vindictive, or to become malicious. We have got to maintain a spirit of give-and-take, a spirit of competition, and yet a spirit of understanding between our people which supersedes and goes far beyond what we call the spirit of political activity.

The third thing I said about this selling job of merchandising is to inject your own personality into the selling process. That is freedom of expression. We do that in politics. You are going to do that on the street corner where you are selling. You are always injecting your own personality. There are people who come to your store who don't come there because you have the right kind of tooth paste--they all have Kolynos, Pepsodent, Ipana (I'd better get them all in because I don't want to be guilty of having been paid for giving a commercial). Why do they come to your store? Sometimes they just happen to be driving by and thought about it. A lot of times people come to your store because they like you. They want to talk to you; they want to needle you; they want to visit with you. They heard you went fishing and didn't catch anything, and you're going to brag about all the fish you didn't catch.

That is your personality coming into the business. They come to your store not because you have a product, but because you are you; and that's the same thing about American democracy. People love this way of life of ours, not because you can blueprint it on a chart, not because you can give lectures on American government (and sometimes that is a dead subject, the way people do it). We love our nation, our life, our spirit of understanding and our spirit of democracy in this country because it is a part of us. We see ourselves in it. We see every little mistake we make. We see every little ornery characteristic we have, and every magnanimous characteristic we have, right in the community of which we are a part.

That is why we understand it so well and why we get along so well. That is injecting our own personality into the selling process.

Finally, we must maintain an honest approach in all our transactions. High ethical standards. That is why I ask my nation, my America and your America, to do certain things today. I don't want this nation to become tainted with dirty oil, and I say that in the full sense of the word. I don't want us in a sordid game of power politics, talking of morality on the one hand and having the grab-hand-shake on the other.

I don't want us to become an Uncle Shylock, as they say. I don't want us to be underwriting imperialism and underwriting decadency while we are talking high moral principles. No--I want my America to be just what is happening.

I find in politics I'm the happiest guy! I never get tired when I am doing what I want to do, when I am saying what I know to be right, when I believe what I know to be correct, and when I stress it. But when I try to see if I can get close to this or that person by sidetracking a little bit and becoming a little devious--God, that's when you get ulcers! (Laughter)

America is going to have international ulcers unless she makes up her mind as a nation and as a people that her mission today in this 20th Century

is not trying to out-finagle the expert finaglers, not trying to outsmart the extra-smart boys who have made it their business to know how to control people by clever devices. America will find her place today in international affairs, and she will come out the way she has always come out--sort of uncouth at times, if you please, rough and ready and not too polished, but saying, by God, what we believe to be right, and saying it often.

When we do that we will have the respect of the world, because there are more of those ordinary people in this world than there are these people who think they are not so ordinary, plenty of them, and those ordinary people are the ones whose sons and daughters or whose fathers and mothers came to this America.

After all, there are few natives here. I don't think any members of the Sioux band are here today, are there? Or the Chippewas? How do you think we got here? Those people over there are no different from your folks or my folks. They came here for the same reason--because America was a phantasy and a dream to your folks and mine.

We have got to talk that way; we have got to believe that way. You see, all of you are a friend of the people if you will start to think a little along these terms.

What I am trying to do today is not to tell you what to think--I'm hoping I can get you to think! I just toss out my ideas. This is like teaching school, only much more fun. I know that when you go home some of you are going to say, "You know, while the guy was talking I sort of believed him, but now I think it over I'm not so sure." That's swell with me--I want you to know it, because I have been to some of your stores and you have talked me into buying something, and when I got home I wasn't so sure, either! (Laughter)

But I will guarantee it was a good experience, and it made me a

sharper customer next time, and the next speaker who gets to you, you will be just a little more analytical of, and maybe you will go home and pick up the editorial page and look at it with a more constructively critical eye. Maybe you will take two newspapers instead of one. Maybe you will see there are two sides of the question, as George Denny does on the Town Hall of the Air.

George Denny holds up a ball, painted black on one side and white on the other. He holds the white side to the audience and asks them what color it is, and everybody says, "It's a white ball." He turns to the people back of him and says, "What do you see?" They say, "A black ball." And he says, "You see, there are two sides to the question."

And sometimes we have to work them out. We have to blend these things together and see whether or not we can do things to bring us to a proper point of agreement. I think you can do it because you have had to do it every day of your lives. Go home now, make yourselves community leaders. You belong to all these organizations, to the fraternal orders, to the Knights of Columbus or the Masons, to the Eagles or the Elks or Odd Fellows or Moose; you belong to a particular church, to the PTA. Don't be just a sitter. Get in there! Go to work!

You have all kinds of ideas. You have more than most of the people who are trying to say they have THE ideas. Get up and take an honest position. Sometimes you may be wrong, and I'll guarantee that when you are wrong they'll set you down. Boy, have I found that out! (Laughter) But it will be good for you and for them.

There is more work to do in America today than at any other time in our history, and I think we have the willing hands and the strong hearts to do it. So from one pharmacist to a group of pharmacists, thanks a lot. You have been a grand audience and I have really appreciated this opportunity to talk to you. Thanks again.



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