

Remarks by Senator Hubert H. Humphrey
in connection with Humphrey-Wier
Testimonial Dinner - February 25, 1954

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Thank you very much, Karl Rolvaag, Congressman Wier and Congressman McCarthy, Parie Kennedy and all my good Minnesota friends. I do hope that you will allow me, before I address myself to the many wonderful friends now attending the banquet at the Nicollet Hotel, if I say a few private words/^{first} to my wife. Since this is a personal privileged conversation between a fellow and his sweetheart, I do hope that you will all turn your ears aside while we talk personally and privately. In this age of wire-tapping, I have a feeling you will be tempted to listen in on our conversation and that is why I exercise this caution.

Muriel, believe me when I say that I fully intended to be sitting alongside you this evening. I had to break this date due to circumstances beyond my control.

You, above all people, know how difficult it is to ever plan one's life or even a day or evening while the Congress is in session. Now, you could tell our good friends that in the House of Representatives where they have strict rules and five minute speeches, a planned and happy life is always possible. That is why Roy Wier and Gene McCarthy were able to go home with you. But in the Senate, the rules of courtesy prevail, coupled with extended debate, unpredictable parliamentary procedures and impossible hours!

However, dear, hasten to reassure friends that I like the job and am not complaining! There may be a Republican Committeeman

in the audience! And one has to be careful what he said these days!

I am sure you have told our many good friends that at least your husband escorted you to the plane and was all set to go with you, when word was ^{received} ~~reached~~ that we would be voting today.

I am positively sure that someone is listening in to our conversation now, so let me just put on the record for one and all to hear that you are a wonderful partner and a source of inspiration to me and to the children.

So please forgive me for standing you up on this date.

On second thought, I am inclined to believe that our many friends, if they could have the Minnesota poll test their reactions, would rather see you than see me. If the poll should reveal otherwise, it is neither scientific nor human!

That was a good speech, Muriel. Take it easy — you may become a candidate. Competition is bad for the family!

Now, my friends turn in! The personal conversation is over.

It is extremely disappointing to me that I am not with you in person this evening. Holding this microphone is by no means as pleasant as personally shaking the hands of each and every one of you.

First of all, I want to congratulate the sponsoring committee for this testimonial dinner. Each and every one of you have worked unselfishly and with dedication and purpose. This has been the secret of the success of the Democratic Farmer-Labor Party. We depend on the people not the paid public relations firms. But then, we have always had a program and not just the propaganda. It is to this program of

liberalism and humanitarian government that we are dedicated.

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You have come out by the hundreds this evening to pay tribute to our friend, Congressman Roy Wier, and to me. I have been sick at heart ever since I found out that it would not be possible for me to be with you. I am sure you will understand, however, why it is that Senator Morse and I could not be with you. A very important issue was decided in the Senate today -- an important vote was taken. And to our friends in labor and management let me say that we were today deciding what kind of administration our labor management laws would have. While the issue was centered around the nomination of a member of the National Labor Relations Board, the issue was much broader in its meaning and application. As it turns out, we lost the fight, but the fight had to be made -- the record had to be made. And I felt it my duty and responsibility to be here in the Senate

We had a responsibility to you people this evening and we both wanted to fulfill this responsibility by being present. We had a greater responsibility, however, as United States Senators to be present and not to miss a crucial vote.

Now let me get down to the serious part of this evening. I want to pay my tribute to a great Congressman and a great American -- our friend, Roy Wier. Roy and I have known each other and worked together for many years. My respect and deep affection for him have grown with the years. He is fearless, courageous, and principled. He is a man of great integrity. There is no firmer friend of the American people in the Congress today. His service as a member of the House Committee on Labor and Education makes Minnesota proud.

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Roy Wier is the symbol of good government. The people of the 3rd Congressional District in Minnesota know where he stands on every public issue. He is ready and has always been ready to accept their judgment on election day, based on his performance. Roy Wier has enjoyed a series of election victories. I am confident that next November, he will again receive the overwhelming support of the voters in the 3rd District. Yes, the DFL Party will go on to victory. Our hour of victory is close at hand.

The American people are facing a serious political challenge today. The high standards of American politics are being steadily undermined by a concerted Republican attempt to foster disunity and mistrust in our society.

Too many representatives and speakers of the Republican Party are substituting smear for sense; character assassination for constructive debate; fear and intimidation for freedom and confidence in the American way of life. We as members of the Democratic Farmer-Labor Party must never allow ourselves to fall into that gutter.

This past week, many orators and would-be orators have used and abused the birthday of Abraham Lincoln to besmirch the high standards of democracy which the life and activities of Abraham Lincoln symbolizes for us today.

Abraham Lincoln belongs to no political party, let alone the political party which today calls itself Republican. He belongs to the American people. He belongs to all lovers of freedom, decency and human dignity. He belongs to the Democratic Farmer-Labor Party of Minnesota. So, let us tonight celebrate Lincoln's birthday. Let

us recall with satisfaction and inspiration these messages from his lips and his pen. Now listen.

"I believe we need nothing so much as to get rid of unjust suspicion of one another".

"Persisting in a charge which one does not know to be true is simply malicious slander."

"It used to be a fashion amongst men that when a charge was made, some sort of proof was brought forward to establish it, and if no proof was found to exist, the charge was dropped".

And now, "The legitimate object of government is to do for a community of people whatever they need to have done, but cannot do at all, or cannot do so well for themselves, in their separate and individual capacities."

This is the philosophy of liberal Democracy.

The anniversaries of Abraham Lincoln and George Washington, should be an inspiration to all Americans. Rather than condemn, we should praise the accomplishments of free people and democratic government. We should lift high the banner of emancipation for the enslaved and oppressed of the world. We should rededicate ourselves to the spiritual values of compassion and ^{service} ~~service~~ for our own needy and underprivileged.

We should devote our lives and talents to making American democracy the fulfillment of justice and fair play to all. We should reveal ourselves to the world as a nation of faith, not fear; strength, not weakness; charity, not greed. Let us be guided by

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the advice of Lincoln -- "with justice toward none ..., charity toward all ... and firmness in the right, as God gives us to see the right". In our time, as in Lincoln's time, we are the "world's last best hope". Let us not destroy that hope, by fostering disunity and bitterness. Each generation must prove again that this "government of the people, by the people and for the people shall not perish from the earth".

Therefore, join with me in this pledge, in this great election year:

"I am an American, proud of my country, grateful for the privileges and responsibilities that are found only where freedom lives. Neither by word nor deed shall I knowingly weaken the faith of the people in the institutions of representative government. I shall dedicate whatever talents God may have given me to the fulfillment of the promises of democracy".

This evening, we have the privilege of listening to a modern-day Lincoln -- with a generous portion of Andrew Jackson. Wayne Morse is no stranger to Minnesota and no stranger ~~to~~ the Minnesota Democratic Farmer-Labor Party. A man of deep and clear conscience; a man of passionate and fiery integrity. He is claimed by Minnesotans as one of their own. He lived in our state, he studied in our state, and he is part of our state's political traditions. I remember with great pride and personal satisfaction that when his conscience and his incisive reasoning led him to abandon the Republican Party during the

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campaign of 1952, it was in Minnesota that he chose to make one of his first political speeches for Adlai Stevenson -- the next President of the United States.

This modern-day Lincoln, this vivid example of true principle in government, this bright vision of what the future of American politics will be is now standing by my side ready to speak out again for truth, for good government, and ready to speak his message to his friends in Minnesota.

It is with great pleasure, pride, and honor that I present to you the Senator from Oregon, the Senator of the American people -- and my good friend, Wayne Morse.

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When Senator Hubert H. Humphrey (D., Minn.) and Senator Wayne Morse (Ind., Ore.) take on a fight for "decent government", they don't let anything get in the way.

The greatest crowd ever to assemble at a political dinner in Minneapolis' history jammed the Nicollet Hotel last week, for a testimonial dinner in honor of Senator Humphrey and Congressman Roy Wier.

Senator Morse was to be guest speaker.

But where was Senator Humphrey, and where was Senator Morse?

Back in Washington, fighting to the last ditch against the Beeson appointment to the National Labor Relations Committee.

They lost the fight -- 45 votes to 42 -- but they served dramatic notice that the Administration couldn't ride roughshod over the interests of America's working men and women without a battle.

They couldn't get to the Minneapolis dinner in person, without sacrificing what they rightly regarded as their public duty and responsibility. But they got there in spirit -- and in voice.

Over a unique arrangement of a 1,200 mile double-loop telephone circuit, they both addressed the Minneapolis crowd via an hour-long, long-distance telephone call.

And the ovation of applause that greeted both of them as they talked from the District of Columbia Committee room, just off the Senate floor, was indication enough that Minnesota's liberals approved their decision to stay on the job, honors or no honors.

Sp file J. H. H. H.

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