

From the Office of
Senator Hubert H. Humphrey
140 Senate Office Building
Washington, D. C.
National 8-3120, Ext. 881

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NO ROOM IN LABOR FOR COMMUNISM OR CORRUPTION

America's organized labor must carry forward "its historic fight for decency and humanity by continuing its unrelenting battle against Communism and corruption", Senator Hubert H. Humphrey declared last night at the annual Honor Night Banquet of the Hibbing Central Labor Union in the Memorial Building at Hibbing.

Free American labor "has no room in its midst for either Communism or corruption", Senator Humphrey said, commending the "responsible leadership" of American Labor for its determination to clean its own house "of the few who blacken the name of the many".

"But the twin evils of Communism and corruption -- the powerful evil forces in the world today -- still relentlessly seek to adulterate both free government and free unions," Senator Humphrey warned.

"We must be ever on guard against these menaces. We must seek to build a society that offers no opportunity for the growth of these twin evils of our time -- Communism and corruption. Wherever we find these forces at work, in organized labor or elsewhere, we must root them out!"

"Organized labor has come of age, and recognizes the responsibilities that go with leadership," he declared. "Responsible labor leaders of today recognize that their power must be used, not abused, for the good of their members and the good of the Nation.

"America and the free world owe a debt of gratitude to the free, organized trade union movement of the United States. In the early history of our country, organized labor fought the battle for decent and humane working conditions, for the elimination of child labor, for the 8-hour day, for improved public health, public education, and a fair wage for a day's work. Organized labor not only contributed to the social and economic betterment of the workers, but it has strengthened our free competitive/economic system. Mass production requires ever increased consumption. Higher wage levels have brought higher living standards. Increased productivity has been shared by management and labor alike -- all for the benefit of the consumer, and the strengthening of the Nation.

"On the international front, America's free trade movement has been a powerful weapon against the forces of Communist totalitarianism. Along with our great religious forces, the free labor movement of America stands as the strong right arm of democracy in combatting Communism. At home, organized labor has performed an outstanding job of cleaning its house of Communist influences and infiltration."

Senator Humphrey praised the courage of AFL President George Meary for clearing out "the scourge of thugs and racketeers on the Nation's waterfront", and called for safeguarding union health and welfare funds against "abuses and dishonest practices" as part of organized labor's "war on corruption".

A sound first step, he declared, would be to assure "an open and public accounting of how every cent of union health and welfare funds is spent".

"One of the really great advances which collective bargaining has made in recent years has been the development of health and welfare fund provisions in union management agreements. Although these provisions are widespread, I think it is fair to say that unions and managements are still experimenting with the kinds of provisions that offer the best protection for the lower cost.

"Abuses have crept into the administration of these programs that need to be eliminated, and eliminated swiftly. These abuses have taken the form of shady or outright dishonest practices, engaged in by corrupt insurance company officials, brokers, union officers, and employers".

In terms of the magnitude of the health and welfare schemes, Senator Humphrey said, "these shady or illegal practices have been limited to a relatively few situations".

"This fact, however, must not blind us to the need for dealing with the problem in a positive and constructive way.

"We ought to be concerned with the malpractices, and not with casting a rigid mold to which all plans would have to adhere to. We ought to explore the extent to which malpractices are illegal under existing state statutes, and to see that these statutes are enforced to the hilt. We ought to be certain that we do not subject health and welfare programs, operating on an interstate basis, to a crazy quilt of conflicting state legislation".

Senator Humphrey expressed the hope that the Congress will proceed to formulate legislation affecting the health and welfare funds which are established as a result of collective bargaining "with intelligence and calm reason based on experience".



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