

Speech
by
Senator Hubert H. Humphrey
at
AFL-CIO Convention
Des Moines, Iowa
Wednesday, September 10, 1958

It is good to be here with you in Iowa, ~~my neighbor~~
~~neighbor state~~. It is good to be with Governor Loveless again,
your able and dedicated chief executive during the past -- and
next -- two years. And it is good to have this opportunity to meet
and talk with the representatives of Iowa's AFL-CIO citizens.

To my mind one of the most heartening and significant
developments in America's public life has been the expansion and
diversification of the interests and activities of organized labor.

As members of the labor movement, you have always taken a broad ^{view} / of

human affairs. That view now encompasses the whole range of our

community, state and national ~~concerns~~ ^{life}, and extends to our ^{international} relation-

ships ~~with all the lands of our~~ ^{in a} relentlessly shrinking world. Indeed, the

contribution of the American Labor Movement to
free trade unionism on the international scene
is a record of patriotic service that needs to
be told. Your fight against Communism at home

and abroad, your generous assistance
in money and leadership to the new trade
unions in Asia, Africa & Latin America —

It is unnecessary, therefore, for me to remind you of
the critical problems we face today. You are acutely aware of the
mounting tensions which afflict the hearts and minds of all the
citizens of the nation. You know that the events of the summer
through which we have just passed have provided little aid and
comfort to anyone but our enemies.

your
work in
France,
Italy,
Greece
and
elsewhere
merits the
thanks and
appreciation
of all.

And you know the difficulties and anxieties that beset
us on every side did not occur by a sort of spontaneous combustion.

They are the ^{result} ~~result~~ of six years of ineptitude, fumbling, and ~~loss~~ ^{stumbling}
~~lessness~~ ^{Republican Puller} on the part of the Eisenhower-Nixon Administration.

~~In something less than six years, this Administration
has brought America into the worst recession since World War II
at home, and into mortal danger of war, and would defeat abroad.~~

Under our form of Government the welfare and security
of the people are best served when the President and Vice President --
the only two officials elected by all the people -- give vigorous

leadership in the conduct of public affairs.

The present incumbents of those high offices have, not ~~only~~ ^{but also} failed, ~~as~~ ^{such} refused to fulfill the functions of leadership.

~~The President has not only failed to lead; he has not even tried.~~
~~The Republican Administration~~
~~to lead.~~ has rejected the obligations and responsibilities of

leadership. This rejection of leadership is typified by ~~the~~ ^{REA}

~~on two recent occasions in connection with~~ ^{two} momentous questions -

integration of the public schools and the growing danger of war off

the China coast. —

On both questions ~~he~~ ^{the President} has refused to make clear what his convictions ^{are} if any, ~~about~~ ^{and} what should be done or what he intends to do. Drift & Delay are the order of the Day.

These are but two examples of the way in which the Republican Eisenhower-Nixon Administration has failed to provide leadership to the nation -- a failure resulting in a surrender to old-guard conservative domestic policies and rigid, contradictory and disorganized foreign policies.

It is a failure which has brought this country to the worst recession it has known since World War II. ^{but again} We are being reassured ^{by the Madison Ave. Happy boys} ~~now in that peculiar Middle Ages sense to which the~~

~~Administration has asserted~~ that this recession is "bottoming out." ^{all is well, so the Republicans} ~~Perhaps we have reached the bottom. In any case, we are~~ ^{about} knocked out. ^{Hucksters say - yet} ~~No one can deny that we have been and still are in serious economic trouble.~~

We have ^{almost} ~~more than~~ five million unemployed and ^{consumer} prices are higher than they have ever been in history. [^] America has suffered a grievous loss of influence and prestige everywhere in the world, and we are faced with threats of war in the Middle East and Far East. The Communist dictatorship has caught up with us in many areas of scientific skill, is speeding ahead at a faster rate of progress in power development, and expands production six or seven per cent a year, while ours slows to less than three per cent. Our military establishment is inadequate to meet the threat posed by ^{the Communist} ~~the~~ dictator-

ship and to keep our vast commitments, ^{Our relations with our} Latin American neighbors are strained and frayed. The Good Neighbor Policy of F.D.R. has been

Wor
for
Policy

Cast aside by an Administration that concentrates
on facts, alliances, and Massive Retaliation. At home
Relations have worsened - The Federal Court order is signed
and the Administration has neither sought nor designed
~~The Administration's failure to exercise the prerogatives~~

There have been repeated examples of
~~and obligations of leadership has permitted corruption and in~~
corruption and influence

fluence-seeking in the highest places of the Government. The
federal regulatory agencies established to protect the public interest

This is only a partial though weighty list of the problems

that confront us as a result of the failure of the Eisenhower-
Republican

Nixon Administration to give essential leadership and direction to

the country. Yet, these problems alone are sufficient to explain

why the Republican party would rather not discuss the issues. They do, however,

explain the gyrations of the Senate Republican policy committee and

the sleight of hand tricks of the Republican National Committee in

their efforts to avoid an accounting to the American voters in the

present campaign.

But in Maine, the voters took a look
at the Republican balance sheet, and voted Democratic.

The Republicans are too aware of the unflattering contrast

between their achievements and those of the Democrats to risk running

on the respective records of the two parties. They are unwilling to

measure Republican performance against Democratic performance on the

The voters in other states
will do the same thing again
this November - a great Democratic Victory
lies before us.

domestic and international issues that mean the difference between prosperity and recession, between peace and threatening war under conditions that make our standing weaker, not stronger.

yes, *The Republican Hustlers* —
they have decided that it is essential to change the

subject, to create a diversion that they hope may distract the attention of the voters from the depressing list of failures, defeats, and disappointments which constitute their actual record.

And the nature of the diversion they hope to manufacture has by now become clear to all ~~of us~~. It has been made clear by the attacks made on the ^{great} Governor of your state -- attacks based on nothing but a ruthless and shoddy readiness to go to any lengths, to stoop to any device, in a desperate effort to somehow snatch victory from the jaws of impending defeat.

The kind of diversion they have decided upon has been made clear by the attacks of the President upon the Congress, for, as he put it, failure to pass a strong labor reform bill, an attack in which he has been seconded, in ^a more/deceptive way, by the

Secretary of Labor.

The nature of the diversionary tactic adopted by the Republicans was, in fact, made clear by the ^{Defeat} ~~loss~~ of the Kennedy-Ives Labor-Management ^{Bill} ~~Reporting and Disclosure Act~~.

For why was it lost? Who opposed it?

You know the answer to that. It was opposed by the National Association of Manufacturers, the United States Chamber of Commerce, the American Retail Federation, ^{and a handful labor leaders} ~~the Teamsters~~, and

the Republican Party. The Republicans killed the Kennedy-Ives Bill because ^{they wanted to Shout about "Corrupt labor bosses" rather than take action,} ~~they realized that they either killed the Bill or killed their only issue in the campaign.~~ They had a fake issue,

a synthetic issue, but it was the only one they had and they were

determined to hang on to it. ^{These Political Demagogues} ~~It was necessary for them to hang on~~

^{have designed a Strategy to attempt to} ~~to carry out the strategy upon which they had depended and which~~

~~consisted of an attempt~~ to transform the organized labor movement of

the United States into a monster stranger than any known to mythology,

and to Use it as both a scape goat and a smoke screen, and then to run full-steam against the monster.

L Let us be perfectly clear and candid on this subject.

You and I are determined that corruption and racketeering must not be permitted to exist in organized labor. You and I, along with all the decent members of labor unions -- the vast overwhelming majority -- are determined that corruption and racketeering must be ~~completely~~ uprooted wherever it exists. *labor or Management.*

That is why the Kennedy-Ives Bill had the support of your national leaders, George Meany and Walter Reuther. They understood that while the Bill had its limitations, *but* the good in it far outweighed the bad. They understood that it would strengthen the hand of decent labor leaders in eliminating abuses and corruption, and in cleaning the House of labor.

But in spite of all ~~these~~ ^{the} pious protestations of the necessity of "cleaning up unions," a majority of Republicans in the

House of Representatives chose to hang on to their solitary,
of the "corrupt labor bosses"
imitation issue like grim death, to sacrifice the objectives to
which they publicly proclaimed loud allegiance and to resort to
shabby political expediency.

↳ They preferred to kill the bill so that they could avoid
facing their real opponents in this campaign, the Democrats, and
instead set up and run against a set of straw-man opponents labeled
"The Labor Bosses, America's Third Party."

↳ That's the title printed boldly across the covers of
a book issued by the Senate Republican Policy Committee last July.
In case there are any lingering doubts as to the particular brand
of political parlor magic the Republicans will use this fall in an
effort to bewitch, bother and bewilder the American voter into
voting for that Grand Old Party in November, here's the proof.

But, my friends, the Republican ~~hand~~ *hand* isn't going to be
quicker than the voter's eye. The old, threadbare, *ball* hidden ~~opponents~~

play isn't going to gain ground for them this year either.

You and I are going to see to that.

We are going to make sure that the people of this country vote on the issues. The Democrats are going to make plain to the country the real issues of this contest throughout all the states of the Union. And we will welcome your advice and counsel in doing the job.

✓ You have given us the benefits of your work and ^{advice} ~~wisdom~~ in the past, and I know you will give it wholeheartedly again now. I am confident that George Meany, Walter Reuther, George Harrison, Joe Keenan, Jim Carey, Dave McDonald, Al Hayes, and others of their caliber, will stand beside us in this contest, as they have in others.

They have supported us in the past because they have believed we shared their convictions and worked toward the same goals. And in the past we have been honored to have them stand

surpluses have increased seven hundred per cent. And it has cost the tax payers ^{Six} ~~seven~~ times as much to run the agriculture program under Benson as it did when the Democrats turned the Administration over to the Republicans in 1952.

Under the Eisenhower-Nixon-Benson Administration, we have experienced a farm slump that has lowered the prices the farmer receives for what he produces while raising those he must pay for what he requires. Republican politics have lowered farm income and increased farm costs.

There are fewer independent farm families, and ~~that remain are poorer -- in spite of temporary fluctuations in farm prices --~~ because of the deliberate policy of independent farm liquidation instituted and steadily pursued by ~~the~~ ~~in~~ this Republican Administration. It is ~~Benson's~~ Benson's philosophy that there are too many farmers. He obviously believes that farming is destined to come under the

control of enormous, corporate entities in which there will be no place for the farm family living on, and giving their work and allegiance to the acres that provide them with a source of livelihood and with a home.

The good earth, in Benson's philosophy, is to be exploited by the vast and efficient corporation. And its good people are to become the displaced persons of Republican bigness that knows the price of everything and the value of nothing.

And there is a part of this Benson program of independent farm family liquidation that is of immediate and intimate concern to you, the members of organized labor. It is that part of his program which aims at driving a wedge between farmers and workers. He has followed a successful strategy of divide and conquer.

We must close the rift between farmer and labor by carrying to the farm families of this nation the truth about their situation, and by bringing home to them the fact that the prosperity

of farmer and worker ~~are not divisible but~~ are inseparable.

We must make clear to our farm families the truth that "Government by veto" frustrated efforts of Congress to provide more adequate legislation to improve our farm situation. When the President, advised by Secretary Benson, vetoed my resolution, adopted by Congress early in the year, to prevent any further cuts in farm prices, he and Benson served notice that any ^{new} farm legislation would be on their terms or would not be accepted.

✓ We had the votes in Congress to pass better farm bills. But we did not have the votes to override a Presidential veto. As a result some simply surrendered to Benson -- unconditionally. Some others of us refused to surrender, as a matter of principle, and voted against the major farm bill enacted by Congress.

I voted against that Bill because it completely neglected the Midwest and completely ignored the lessons we have had on farm legislation. It did meet some serious cotton and rice problems

which confronted the South. But it did nothing to bolster Midwest farm income. It offered nothing whatsoever to dairy farmers, who make up an important part of our Midwest farm economy. It did nothing toward curbing surpluses. And it meant and means that the will tax payers pay more for fewer results.

While we were able to retain in the farm bill the party concept which the Administration is seeking to destroy, our success amounted to little more than a gesture. Our fight to improve the bill in Committee and on the Senate floor was against hopeless odds. *(because of the threat of veto,* The Senate even rejected my absolute minimum offer of increasing dairy support to \$3.15 per hundredweight -- a compromise from the \$3.25 "freeze" voted earlier in the Senate.

~~Three dollars and fifteen cents is an absurdly low protection for the dairy industry. But only six Republican Senators would risk opposing Benson discipline enough to vote for that figure and with Cotton State senators compelled to bow to Benson or get~~



nothing at all, there was no chance of our winning out.

The full impact of the Bill voted may not be felt for some years. It is a "cheap feed" bill, which appeals to some people. But in the long run it will mean cheap hogs, cheap cattle, cheap milk -- ^{because} ~~because~~ the production of all of them will be encouraged. Reliable estimates say that it will mean a corn crop of ^{over} four ^{Billion} ~~million~~ bushels next year at a time when we already have a surplus.

So the predictable result will again be lower purchasing power for our family-size farms and a poorer economy for all of us who live in farm states.

I have discussed this farm situation with you because I know you are concerned with all aspects of our economy. I happen to know, too, that the Republicans have decided that after all there is some hope of their winning the farm vote this year. Their optimism about this has been deflated by the fact that the Agriculture Department report on farm prices shows that they have

dropped each month for the past three months in a row. But they are apparently nevertheless determined to bring out to the Midwest their most prominent Republican spokesmen -- including "Ike" himself -- to ^{Propagandize} ~~formalize~~ the farmers" in hope of reaping a large crop of farm votes.

They will preach the virtues of Republicanism to the farmers -- those of them whom Republicanism has not liquidated out of farming -- and they will attempt to prove once more that the Eisenhower-Nixon-Benson team is the farmer's friend.

This reminds me, my friends, of a story about President Woodrow Wilson and the farmers of our Midwest. It seems he was campaigning in the farm belt and happened to be speaking in an open field to a gathering of farm folk. There was no platform for him to stand upon so that those people in the rear of the gathering could see and hear him, but there happened to be a manure spreader handy, and he stepped up on that to speak and began his remarks by apologizing



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