

From the office of
Senator Kenneth B. Keating (R., N.Y.)
Washington, D. C.

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INTERVIEW OF
THE HONORABLE HUBERT HUMPHREY (D., MINNESOTA)
United States Senator
by
SEN. SENATOR KENNETH B. KEATING
(Republican, New York)

On Television Program
"LET'S LOOK AT CONGRESS"*
Sunday, January 8, 1961

Senator Humphrey:

- *** Predicts Kennedy will be "a forceful President" who will fight for his program in Congress.
- *** Outlines "strong and prompt" executive action in field of civil rights which Kennedy Administration will first take but predicts Kennedy will propose civil rights legislation "along the lines" of Title III.
- *** Foresees "a little furor" over confirmation of Dillon and Bowles.
- *** Expresses hope President Eisenhower and Vice President Nixon will be utilized by Kennedy Administration.
- *** Admits his liberalism has "mellowed" but denies it has "faded away."
- *** Thinks new Secretary of Agriculture will find a solution to the farm problem.

*Over Stations:

WTEN-TV, Albany, New York
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KEATING: Ladies and Gentlemen, this is Senator Ken Keating in Washington welcoming you to the first in the 1961 series of "Let's Look at Congress." In keeping with the bipartisan traditions of this program, I am very pleased to have as my first guest one of my good personal friends from the Democratic side of the aisle in the United States Senate, the Honorable Hubert H. Humphrey of Minnesota. Senator Humphrey is, as most of you know, an eloquent spokesman for American democracy--both with a small or capital "D." He has compiled a distinguished record in the Congress. As you know, he was a leading contender for his party's nomination as President last year. He was reelected for a third term to the Senate in November. This past week he was chosen as Majority Whip or assistant leader in the Senate, a post in which he will exert considerable influence on the legislative program to be proposed by the Kennedy Administration.

Hubert, I'm delighted to have you as a guest again on this program.

HUMPHREY: Well Ken, I consider it a rare privilege to be on your program and to be here with you. You're one of my good friends and one of the most effective legislators we have here and I'm so pleased to have the chance to share a few thoughts with you today.

KEATING: I appreciate that very much. Hubert, you have campaigned both against Senator Kennedy for the nomination and for him for the election. You've been on close, friendly terms with him for many years, as I have. How do you characterize him? What kind of President is he going to make?

HUMPHREY: Well Ken, I think he'll make a forceful President. Senator Kennedy or President-elect Kennedy has a knowledge of government, he's a student of public affairs, he understands the prerogatives and powers of the office of President. I believe that he fully understands and appreciates the many problems and the many challenges that we face in the Legislative Branch. I expect him to be a President with a program of action, with a determination to carry out that program, and one with rather broad vision.

KEATING: You think he's going to fight tooth and nail for his program?

HUMPHREY: Yes I do. I think that he's a determined man and a man with considerable confidence in his whole abilities and in the capacities of this country. I'm sure that he'll fight for it and he'll expect those of us who are his porters here in the Congress to stand up and fight along side of him, which I intend to do.

KEATING: What do you anticipate will be the first major legislation to be brought before the Senate.

HUMPHREY: It will be the so-called depressed areas legislation. This has been given priority--it is S. 1--the first major bill to be introduced and upon which there will be hearings and legislative action. The President-elect or the new President has made a strong commitment on aid to the so-called economically distressed areas and as you know Senator Douglas and a task force with Senator Douglas has prepared the legislation and the Congress ought to move quickly on it.

KEATING: Do you anticipate that Senator Kennedy is going to press for legislative action in the field of civil rights?

HUMPHREY: Yes, I think so. I would expect first though that he will take very strong action and prompt action in the Executive Branch of Government.

KEATING: What kind of action in the Executive Branch?

HUMPHREY: The contract compliance features relating to government contracts, particularly defense contracts--this is what you might call fair employment practices within those companies that do business with the Government of the United States--and the use of the powers of the Federal Government to seek compliance with fair employment practices. There'll be action in the field of housing, I think, with Mr. Weaver as the new Housing and Home Finance Director, an American Negro with almost Cabinet rank and in one of the high offices of our Government. You will

also see effective action, it seems to me, in the Attorney General's office, the Department of Justice--as we've had considerable action under the Eisenhower Administration in this, to protect the right to vote and other civil rights and civil liberties which are guaranteed by the Constitution.

KEATING: And you think the President-elect will not propose any legislative remedies until he's exhausted these executive remedies?

HUMPHREY: No, I think that there will be a civil rights program proposed. I do feel, however, that President Kennedy or the new Kennedy Administration will move first in the field of executive leadership and administrative action. I think this is required, also, and I am also convinced that with the laws that we have on the books, that a great deal can be done to protect this very important and all important right to vote. I happen to feel, and of course I'm sure you do too, that we need to take further legislative action, particularly on what we commonly call Title III of the civil rights program, which gives the government the power to step in through the offices of the government or the Justice Department to protect the civil rights of every American, whatever right it may be.

KEATING: Do you think Senator Kennedy will back up this Title III?

HUMPHREY: Yes, I do. I think that at the appropriate time there will be a message sent to the Congress--a proposal sent to the Congress--along the lines of Title III. Whether it will be exactly as we had it before, I couldn't say.

KEATING: Tell me, what do you think of the choices for the Kennedy cabinet?

HUMPHREY: Well, by and large I like them. I think that what President-elect Kennedy has done is to select men in whom he can have confidence, men that will carry out the program that he believes is necessary for this country, and also men who are not too firmly committed publicly on some program of their own. You can't have several programs; you must have a program of the Administration. I also want to say, and this may not be too satisfying to some of my good partisan Democratic colleagues, that I think that in light of the critical situation that faces our country, particularly in the international field, that it is important that we have responsible representation of the Republican Party. Now, Mr. Dillon, who is Secretary of the Treasury-to be, is a Republican. He's a good Republican. I understand that he even made a rather handsome contribution to the Republican campaign. Nevertheless, he's a competent man who understands economics. I think he will do well as the Secretary of the Treasury. And there are, I believe, some other Republicans in the Cabinet or at sub-Cabinet rank. I think this is necessary.

KEATING: You're not against all Republicans as such.

HUMPHREY: Oh, I have my main problem with them at election time. Other than that I find them very charitable and delightful people.

KEATING: Now, this question has been raised, Hubert. You've been chosen as the Majority Whip of the Senate. That's a position of party responsibility and there's been some suggestion that your well-famed liberalism may have mellowed some and that we might expect a less firm position on that--and more cajolery from you. What do you have to say to that?

HUMPHREY: Well, I've always tried to be a rather affable fellow, if I could be. I sort of like people--I like you. That's not very difficult, may I say, and I find my colleagues on the Republican side of the aisle just about as delightful as any people could be, as I do my fellow Democrats. If I've mellowed a bit--well, you know when wine ages a bit it's higher priced, it is more delightful, it is more delectable. I would say that if my liberalism has mellowed, it doesn't mean that my liberalism has faded away. Possibly it will become a little more palatable to my colleagues; I hope so. No, I'm a liberal and I wouldn't sacrifice my convictions or my ideals for any job that the Senate of the United States or any other job could offer me. I've gone along now almost 50 years--at least a portion of 50 years--saying that I was a liberal and other people accusing me of even being more than

that. So I'm not ready to toss that over and what I hope to be able to do is to stand by my convictions but always recognizing that there is room for accommodation. I believe that the legislative process necessitates adjustments and accommodation. I don't think you can always get your way. I think you ought to fight for it--I think you ought to have your convictions, you ought to do the best that you can. But the job of the legislator is to find a consensus, to find an area of agreement, and I'm going to try my very best to try to find that area of agreement without sacrificing principle.

KEATING: Do you think this new Administration is going to try to find some new solution to the farm problem?

HUMPHREY: I hope so.

KEATING: What kind of solution do you think it's going to be?

HUMPHREY: Now this program doesn't have enough time for that. I'll only say this: the new Secretary of Agriculture is a man whom I have known for years. He's one of my most intimate and personal friends and he's a scholar, he's a student, he's courageous, he's honest and he's not a doctrinaire man. He will look for answers, he will seek solutions, he will seek guidance and he will find plenty of it. I know that he will be able to sort so-called wheat from the chaff and I've always said to beware of those who just come up with a plan. There's always a gimmick around, you know, and you have to look out for it. I'm sure that the Secretary of Agriculture--the new Secretary of Agriculture--will be on the alert. We'll find solutions. This problem is not as serious as some people paint it. With the proper use of food and fiber on the international scene and with a Secretary of Agriculture that is the champion of the farmer--that speaks up for the farmer, gives this farmer of ours a sense of confidence in his government--I think we'll find a solution. I'm confident that we will.

KEATING: What do you think is going to be the role of Vice President Johnson in shaping the legislative program?

HUMPHREY: I believe that President-elect Kennedy will depend on him a great deal to be the contact between the White House and the Congress. Knowing Lyndon Johnson as I do--and as you do--you know that he'll be active and he'll be busy and he will be doing the very best that he can, and he has great talent to move along the President's program.

KEATING: There's been some question raised about President-elect Kennedy's plan to televise some of his news conferences. Do you have any comment on that?

HUMPHREY: I think it is a great idea. Television is one of the tremendous powerful instruments of public education and information. The President of the United States can do a great service for our democracy, for the people, for their education and the better understanding of government, by the use of the television in his press conferences and of radio and, of course, the newspapers. The more information our people have, the better.

KEATING: Do you think President-elect Kennedy ought to in any way utilize the services of President Eisenhower in the years ahead?

HUMPHREY: I hope so. President Eisenhower has the greatest reservoir of good will of any American throughout the world--as great as anyone, anyway--and I think he would want to help. He can be a tremendous help with the contact of our allies. He could be of help at times in critical diplomatic negotiations. I was so pleased to see the very friendly relationship that seemed to come out of that conference between President Eisenhower and President-elect Kennedy. That's the way it ought to be.

KEATING: What about utilizing Vice President Nixon?

HUMPHREY: Yes, Vice President Nixon has great talent and he's a powerful leader and I'm sure the Vice President would respond to any request that might be made by President-elect Kennedy. Of course, he is a leader of his party. He has to be somewhat discreet and careful because of that. We all know that. But if there is a great need of him in some international situation where we need the finest and most able and talented type of representation, I believe that Vice President Nixon might well be called on along with others for that. I've always felt, Ken, that in the struggle in which we are engaged, we need the best that we can put into the field all the time. I'm not too worried about the tag that's on it. I recognize that leaders of political parties have to be careful about that--they can't afford to sacrifice their party leadership or their party position--but I have a feeling that Mr. Nixon, if called upon, would respond.

KEATING: Do you anticipate a stiff fight over confirmation of any of the Cabinet choices?

HUMPHREY: I would imagine that the Dillon appointment and possibly the Bowles appointment might cause a little furor around here, but I think the confirmations will come quite readily.

KEATING: President-elect Kennedy has laid a lot of stress on the issue of disarmament and he has made a number of personnel appointments in this field. Do you see any prospects for more progress in that field?

HUMPHREY: Well, I think we have to keep at it and I was pleased to see him appoint John McCloy as the disarmament chief. He is a man of considerable understanding and ability in the field of international affairs and one that isn't tagged, again, one way or the other. You need to come in with a rather clean look on this thing.

KEATING: Now with that clean look we've got to close because our time is up. Our guest today, ladies and gentlemen, has been Hubert Humphrey, Senator from Minnesota and Majority Whip of the United States Senate.

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SEN. HUBERT H. HUMPHREY

WASHINGTON DC JANUARY 5, 1960

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Hubert H. Humphrey

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