

EXCERPTS OF REMARKS BY  
SENATOR HUBERT H. HUMPHREY

GRIDIRON CLUB DINNER

WASHINGTON, D.C.

March 9, 1963

Mr. President, Mr. Vice President, Governor Romney, Mr. Beale, members of the Gridiron Club...fellow managers of the news and guests of the Internal Revenue Service.

Last night I had dinner with the man who stood here in my shoes just ten years ago -- Adlai Stevenson. He appeared before you shortly after the Eisenhower inauguration, and his famous opening line was:..."A funny thing happened to me on the way to the White House."

You know -- ten years ago I thought that was very funny.

And then came West Virginia.

I have not come here tonight with a speech -- only some random thoughts -- a few Bartlett's quotations....and some Alsop's fables.

You may remember that the President and I travelled together quite a bit in 1960. It was a good scrap, and I have no regrets.

Frankly, gentlemen, I think I did pretty well for a Protestant.

So here we are today. I have Strom Thurmond, and he has Charles DeGaulle.

Let the punishment fit the crime.

But if our President sometimes has his difficulties with the DeGaulles and Diefenbakers of the world, let us never forget that he is the first President within the memory of man to have the last word with May Craig.

I was interested in reading recently that Governor Romney announced that he would not be a candidate for President in 1964.

Governor, that makes two of us.

Now my advice to you Republicans is to remember the immortal words of that apostle of stand-pat Republicanism -- Calvin Coolidge. Permit me to paraphrase and update -- I do not choose to lose.

Think of all the money you would save.

Rocky is the only Republican I know who can finance two campaigns in eight years.

He can afford to lose!

I was out in Minnesota last week and was talking with one of my good Republican friends about the 1964 elections. I was pointing out to him the big edge we Democrats have in registration. We're just a bigger party.

"But Hubert," he said, "Don't you believe it's possible that a good little man can beat a good big man? At least once in a while?"

"Yes, I said, it's certainly possible. After all, David did defeat Goliath.

But --

It was so unusual -- that three thousand years later, people are still talking about it.

(more)

But I sense a certain note of melancholy tonight. For we are gathered here to commemorate the end of a glorious era -- the last of the tax-deductible gridiron dinners. The Internal Revenue Service now seeks to invade the privileged sanctuary of American individualism and lay its rough hands on the holy of holies -- the expense account. So let us eat, drink and be merry -- for tomorrow we shall have tax reform.

France may have the Mona Lisa...England may have the Cheshire Cat...but we have the only smiling tax collector in history...Merry Mortimer Caplin.

The new frontier has arrived -- ask not what you can deduct for business expenses... Just eat at Howard Johnson's and go Greyhound.

Mr. President, I'm loyal. I support most of your tax proposals...but really, Mr. President, things are going too far.

Do we have to give up those dinners at Twenty-One?

Do we really have to report her name and address?

It's wonderful to have a Republican Secretary of the Treasury. It makes the pain so bi-partisan.

So be of good cheer -- and sing along with Doug -- the song of the New Frontier --- "I'll be down to get you with a tax cut, honey."

Don't worry about those tax reforms, gentlemen. I've been pleading our case every Tuesday at the White House breakfasts.

(By the way -- two or three years ago I counted on having most of my meals over there. )

Another thing I've been talking to the President about is this problem of defense contracts. I've been pointing out that all the big defense contracts have been going out to the West Coast -- leaving nothing for the Midwest.

My argument has been overwhelmingly persuasive.

The tide of defense contracts has been reversed. Completely reversed!

Teddy, for God's sake -- leave something for the rest of us.

I'm not even suggesting that President Kennedy, the O'Donnells, the O'Briens and the McGuires give any special favors. But I have noticed that Ireland just received its first sugar quota in history.

But enough about the Kennedys.

A word about you publishers.

I hear you're complaining about the White House managing the news.

Shame on you!

When did professionals ever lower themselves to worry about amateurs!

Actually, it is quite a switch to have newsmen complaining about politicians.

It's usually the other way.

I've felt a few journalistic darts in my day --

But one thing, gentlemen -- I've never, never been given the shaft.

I read the farewell comments of our former Vice President at the end of the California gubernatorial campaign. I understand that most of you were secret Democratic agents -- who had long been waiting the chance to strike a blow for the Democratic cause.

How wonderful it is to be in this hotbed of the Democratic underground tonight.

(more)

Speaking of politicians and the news media, I want to offer a friendly suggestion.

The Ev and Charlie show should be renamed. Let's call it "The Twilight Zone".

I hope this Bobby Kennedy hiking craze doesn't catch on with the Republicans -- it would be too painful to watch Ev and Charlie walking fifty miles -- backwards.

Frankly, I'm a Pierre Salinger man, myself.

The Humphrey physical fitness program goes this way -- when you wake up in the morning, think at least three strenuous thoughts; then make sure you're running late for every appointment -- never walk late -- always run!

Now, gentlemen, I should like to leave you with one last thought about the 1964 elections.

Do you really think that the American voters would elect a President who might appoint his brother David as Attorney General, his brother Winthrop as head of the Peace Corps, and then turn around and support a third brother, Lawrence for the United States Senate?

Gentlemen, we of the Kennedy Administration do not believe that this country will stand for a dynasty.

I know it is customary for the speaker on these occasions to strike a sober note before he concludes. It is a good tradition, which I gladly observe, but my message, which, incidentally, is addressed to both Democrats and Republicans, can be compressed into one sentence from President Lincoln. At another trying period in our history, Lincoln said:

"In times like the present, men should utter nothing for which they would not willingly be responsible through time and in eternity."

It seems to me that advice is just as good today as it was 100 years ago.

Goodnight and God bless you.

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(LONG PAUSE...THEN IF YOU NEED IT:)

And then came West Virginia. (PAUSE)

I have not come here tonight with a speech--only with some random thoughts--a few Bartlett's quotations...(SLOW) and some Alsop's fables. (PAUSE)

You may remember that the President and I travelled together quite a bit in 1960. It was a good scrap, and I have no regrets.

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And then think of all the money you would save.

Rocky is the only Republican I know who can finance two campaigns in eight years. (SLIGHT PAUSE)

He can afford to lose!

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"But Hubert," he said, "Don't you believe it's possible that a good little man can beat a good big man? At least once in a while?"

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did defeat Goliath.

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My argument has been overwhelmingly persuasive.

(FLATLY) The tide of defense contracts has been reversed.

Completely reversed! (PAUSE...THEN DRAMATIC OUTSTRETCHED ARMS TO TEDDY)

Teddy--for God's sake--leave something for the Midwest!

(PAUSE)

I'm not even suggesting that President Kennedy, the O'Donnells, the O'Briens and the McGuires give out any special favours. But I have noticed that Ireland just received its first sugar quota in history. (PAUSE)

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the news. (PAUSE--LOOK AROUND)

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about amateurs! (PAUSE)

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(SLOW)

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(QUIET AND CLOSE TO MIKE)

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