

SUBJECT: "Program for Our Youngsters"

PARTICIPANT: Senator Hubert Humphrey

MODERATOR: Harry W. Flannery

TIME: 13:20

FLANNERY: AS WE SEE IT.

HUMPHREY: I am going to introduce very shortly legislation to provide a national child care center which will be modern and will be as exemplary of what we can do as the National Institutes of Health are. And I want to see a National Child Welfare Center in the nation's capital that will be an experimental center in a real sense, that will provide long-term treatment and care for some of those children that have no other place to go, but primarily will give us an opportunity to work out better programs for child care. And the nation's capital, it seems to me, is the proper place.

FLANNERY: Senator Hubert Humphrey of Minnesota, to an AFL-CIO Community Service meeting here in Washington. This radio station of the ABC network and the AFL-CIO bring you Senator Humphrey as he talked first about the Youth Employment Opportunities Bill.

HUMPHREY: As you know, we passed this in the Senate -- the vote was 50 to 34, which is a substantial margin, a margin that ought to indicate rather popular support for the measure. The Youth Employment Act has two features: Section one, the Youth Conservation Corps provision, which provides for the establishment of camps, with enrollees in each not to exceed 50. These camps provide gainful employment as well as academic and vocational and technical instruction, including on-the-job training in a goodly number of trades or occupations.

The second feature of the program is the Home-Town Youth Corps which relates primarily to the employment of our young people in the large cities on community projects, public projects for non-profit organizations or public institutions which would be the recipients of these young people as employees. The maximum number is 60,000 in each of the groups in the Youth Conservation Corps or in the Home-Town Youth Corps.

This is a good program. There are many arguments made against it. Most of them, I think, were poorly based or without foundation. The arguments made against the program were that it didn't provide enough vocational training. Well, we ought to provide more and better technical and vocational training. There isn't any doubt about that for many of our young people. This is really a problem for our entire school system. In fact, we need a better school system. Whatever you can say about the inadequacies of present vocational education you can say about the inadequacies of most of education in America and thank goodness for the AFL-CIO and others that are interested in promoting a better quality of education -- not only better facilities but better remuneration for our teachers, which in turn brings better teachers, higher standards of teaching as well as higher standards of equipment and facilities.

The argument made against the Youth Conservation Corps that it would not really alleviate unemployment is also, I think, a fallacious argument. It isn't a program designed to get rid of all unemployment among young people because the answer to unemployment is a bigger and a better and a more growing economy. That is the real answer. The answer is an expanded industrial base, expanded job opportunities that come from an economy that has a gross national product in this country of at least \$600 billion. If we can get our gross national product up to \$600 billion, we will really have absorbed most of the unemployed. That is, at least up to the point of what we call the real hard core where a substantial amount of re-training and social service work is required to make persons employable.

So, this argument that it isn't a good program because it won't absorb all the youth unemployed, I think falls by its own inadequacy. It does employ some, and what is more important, for those that it

does employ, it gives a meaning to life. These young people are given a chance to be good citizens, they are given a chance to not only do something constructive for their country but for themselves. They are given a real chance to make a contribution to community life and they get the feeling of having been on a job and doing a job. A large number of young people have never been on a job; they just never have had a chance to have a work experience.

Well, I am all steamed up about the youth employment program but our problem now is in the House of Representatives and anything you can do to help us in that area will be much appreciated not only by those of us who sponsor this bill -- and I have sponsored this legislation since 1956 -- but it will be much appreciated by the youth of America and by the parents of America, because this program is designed to help young people, designed to help families, designed to help communities. It is tied up presently in the Rules Committee of the House. Therefore, I do hope that any of you that have the time will speak out firmly and resolutely for prompt action in the Rules Committee of the House.

I predict its passage. I want to go on record here now. I predict that the Congress will pass a Youth Employment Act and the President will sign it and that this will be the beginning of a very fine and substantial program to help our young people.

FLANNERY: The Senator then took up the Junior Village here in Washington.

HUMPHREY: This is a home or an institution for children whose family situations necessitate their separation from parents or for children who are just cast aside. This particular institution has been the subject of considerable attention in the press of Washington, D. C., and on radio and television, and I think it deserves every bit of attention that it is getting and it deserves some positive action. I want to comment a little bit about the action I think we ought to take.

You go out there and what do you find? You find what we call cottages -- they are old brick buildings, 50 or 60 years of age in which anywhere from 20 to 30 young people ought to be housed or maybe as many as 50, but in which there will be 75, 80 or 90 housed. In other words, the capacity is overloaded. There is also inadequate ventilation and more importantly, lack of staff. I have been in foreign countries that we are helping, my fellow Americans, that have received buildings and equipment from the people of the United States that are better than these young people have out here by far. Now, I am for foreign aid, don't misunderstand me, and nothing pleases Hubert Humphrey more than to go to a country and find a children's hospital or to find an orphanage that we are helping or to find a school that we are aiding -- and we are helping to build thousands of them -- with federal aid, I might add too.

We are building hundreds of thousands of classrooms around the world with federal aid and not very many in the United States unless you have a military camp alongside of it. What kind of thinking is this? We have got to become righteously indignant and angry about it.

I saw this morning in Junior Village, for example, three-story buildings without a fire escape -- 40 or 50 children on one floor in a room not over twice the size of this room. Cots stacked with only eight inches in between. What happens if there is a fire? Now, there isn't a private club that would be permitted to have this sort of condition, but for children with no parents or from broken homes, or from emotionally disturbed parents or from parents that were n'er do wells; children that rely only upon a friendly government -- that's all the help that they have, and a friendly community. They have got them stacked up there on the third floor with inadequate toilet facilities, no fire escape, no ventilation -- and it is hot in Washington in the summer -- no locker, no place to put their clothes, inadequate laundry facilities. Yet, we can build a new race track every three months around here.

And so, I have made some suggestions: first, more staff must be provided. They don't even have school buses, mind you. Now, they have a school on the property for some of the children but they send a large number of the children out. They take them down and put them on a public bus. The little fellows and girls never had any parental home life at all, they just have to fend for themselves. You would think the country was bankrupt. They ought to go over and get some of those military buses they have -- there are plenty of them around here.

I said fire escapes. Finally, in this year's appropriation the District Welfare Department is asking for fire escapes. I want to tell you, we ought to find out who is responsible for not asking for them before and fire him. If I were the mayor of Minneapolis and found those conditions which I did, I would dismiss the man that was responsible and not only dismiss him but bring him up for charges.

Thirdly, we need an adequate number of beds and wall lockers. Don't you think children ought to have a place to put their clothes? Mattresses, if you please, that are not clean. I would think that the United States of America would know how to provide for mattresses for its own children. Now, I have been able to arrange to find 325 new beds and mattresses out here in an Air Force installation and I am asking the Welfare Department to submit a request for equipment which is needed. You know what they do? They send up a request for what they think we will provide. I think we ought to send up a request for what is needed.

Fourth, we need an immediate appropriation to begin construction of water mains, which will carry sufficient water so that they can have hot water at Junior Village.

There are improvements and I want to testify here that Robert Byrd, the Senator from West Virginia, has been primarily responsible for these improvements. He is the Chairman of the District Subcommittee. He went out and he did do something about getting some new equipment and getting new cottages and stepping up the construction of these new cottages and all you have got to do is see the new cottages, which I think we ought to call Bob Byrd Cottages and see the old cottages, and see the difference.

And the new cottages aren't extravagant, they are made out of building block, some modest building materials, but they are clean and they are ventilated. There is no air conditioning, I might add, and Washington is mighty hot. Now, if air conditioning is good for Congress, it seems to me it ought to be good for Junior Village. I know how much money we spent on the Senate Office Building for air conditioning and I suggest that we might feel a little better about the Senate Office Building if we provided air conditioning for some less fortunate people than members of Congress. They built a building down there -- a temporary building -- there are people around this town that have "temporaryitis." They must think children are temporary or something. Look at Harrison Cottage, it is a temporary. The trouble is, when they built it, they forgot that water would flow in it. It is down at the bottom of a hill and the water comes off the roofs of the other buildings and right out into the playground, not into storm sewers, just right out onto the playground, and then the water rushes right on down into the Harrison Cottage. Now, we are developing some extra very good floor moppers. There is no drain in the floor of Harrison Cottage and there are 80 boys in Harrison Cottage for a cottage designed for about 50.

I was out there with those little boys this morning -- they are lots of fun. By the way, they need athletic equipment and, mind you, in a nation that prides itself on professional football, baseball, basketball and every conceivable kind of sport, they don't have athletic equipment, in the nation's capital. What in the devil is wrong around here? I think I will have to go out and buy it myself, I just bought some athletic equipment for the youngsters down in Venezuela. As down there, I am going to do something for these youngsters. But they need a minimum of \$1,000 worth --

baseballs, volleyballs, bats, footballs -- for these youngsters, and something for the little girls. Not some old hand-me-downs either.

I think we need a long-range program, too, and I have made a proposal for a national child care center. By the way, the President's Committee on Washington, D. C. Affairs has been looking into all of these matters. The President is taking a keen interest, as you know, in the District of Columbia. Thank goodness.

FLANNERY: That was Senator Hubert Humphrey, Democrat of Minnesota, as he addressed an AFL-CIO Community Service meeting here in Washington.

This is Harry W. Flannery speaking for the AFL-CIO and inviting you to be with us next week at this same time for AS WE SEE IT.

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