

Citizens Crusade Against Poverty
February 10, 1965

Reuther
my speeches.

In the year 1620, John Winthrop, later to be the first Governor of Massachusetts, assembled the Puritans on the deck of the Mayflower and told them: "We must consider that we shall be as a city set upon a hill and the eyes of all people will be upon us."

The Puritans were in the middle of the Atlantic when John Winthrop told them of their special place in history.

Today, the eyes of all people are still upon us -- but our city is not yet complete.

Like the Puritans, we are still in mid-passage. We cannot continue our journey -- we cannot complete our city -- until we achieve the proudest goal to which any nation has yet aspired: the goal of equal opportunity for all Americans. The passage of the Economic Opportunity Act of 1964 was a firm and determined step toward that goal -- toward the creation of that city on the hill.

I welcome you today as you come together to offer the
Nation your time, your talents and your matchless experience.

↳ We shall surely need them as -- together -- we take the next
step in our journey: the eradication of poverty in all its
forms.

↳ The annals of the poor are neither short nor simple in
mid-century America -- if, indeed, they ever were. ↳ An under-
standing of the dimensions of the problem we face, requires
not merely compassion but comprehension -- comprehension of
the incomprehensible. !

↳ To those persons grown accustomed to the face of a
smiling America, the facts of poverty are baffling. ↳ To
understand them requires a realization that: —

↳ --In the midst of the richest nation in all of history,
35 million Americans, ^{almost} ~~one-fifth~~ one-fifth of the Nation, are
poor by generally accepted standards;

↳ --The average income of the almost 10 million American

families in poverty is less than \$1,800 a year;

~~The number of families living in what can only be
termed extreme misery, incomes of less than \$1,000 per
year, has actually increased somewhat in recent years.~~

L This, then, is the far side of our paradise.!

Until recently, the cruelest aspect of poverty in
America seemed to be its sheer hopelessness. L For many
persons, the future appeared no brighter than the past --
in this land of milk and honey, some people appeared destined
to taste only bitter dregs.

It has been demonstrated, for example, that a child
born in poverty in an American city is likely to become a
slow learner, an illiterate, a reject, a delinquent, and a *suena*
criminal -- he is likely to live miserably, die young, and
leave no legacy but offspring fated to meet the same
ignominious destiny.

L It is both incredible and intolerable that 40 percent

of the families receiving Aid for Families with dependent

Children either the father or the mother were ~~themselves~~

raised in families which had also received public assistance!

L We must break ^{this} ~~the~~ cycle of poverty! We must free

millions of Americans from the bondage of that tragic equation

which often decrees that poor shall beget poor and ignorance

shall beget misery. ~~And this is the goal of the War on~~

~~Poverty.~~

we must get our act together War on Poverty!

L This is a war to which we are unconditionally committed.

L But we have not finally, irrevocably selected our strategy and

tactics. The battles are to be fought on largely uncharted

terrain -- where armies have never clashed.

L You know, of course, some of the weapons we have

already chosen. You know some of the battles we are now

beginning to wage. You know, for example, that the President

has called for a doubling of the present program levels for the

Office of Economic Opportunity.

L You know of the Community Action Programs -- by July 1965 we will have funded about 400 local anti-poverty plans and programs, and the 1966 budget will support 600 such programs.

L You know of the Job Corps -- by July we will be well along toward training more than 25,000 youths, and by 1966 the Corps will have established more than 100 urban and rural residential centers for young men and women, to give them basic education, skilled training and sound working experience.

L You know of the Neighborhood Youth Corps -- by July we will have enrolled more than 175,000 young men and women, and the 1966 budget will provide work opportunities and training for 300,000 youths.

L You know of VISTA -- the Volunteers in Service to America -- more than 5,000 volunteers will be molded into a domestic Peace Corps.

L You know of the Small Business Programs which by July will have disbursed up to \$5 million to very small firms, (next Page)

placing disadvantaged entrepreneurs back on their feet or
putting them in business for the first time.

L You know of the work-study programs, the adult basic
education programs, and all those other weapons in the
arsenal which Sargent Shriver and his dedicated associates
are so carefully and conscientiously administering.

L But you also understand that the programs contained in
the Economic Opportunity Act of 1964 cannot provide the total
answer. They represent only several divisions in the army
that must be recruited to achieve total victory in this war.

L The President has noted that "poverty has many roots
but the tap root is ignorance." L Today two-thirds of the
families headed by those with less than a grammar school
education live in poverty. L Our education program, therefore,
must be an integral part of a nationwide attack on the

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causes and effects of poverty.

L The President's proposal for medical care for the aged is inseparably tied to the war on poverty. L The median income of families headed by persons over 65 years of age is less than \$3,000. In the case of unattached elderly people, the income is only a little more than \$1,000 a year. And this age group is increasing almost twice as fast as it was 10 years ago.

L So it is with the Appalachian program, the minimum wage, unemployment insurance, and area redevelopment. All are joined by a common thread: the determination to offer to every American, old or young, wherever situated, however engaged, the opportunity to share fully and freely in the fruits of American progress.

L No two programs could more clearly demonstrate this determination and this inter-relationship than the Economic Opportunity Act and the Civil Rights Act. Negro Americans

Civil
Rights

are today twice as likely to be illiterate, twice as likely to be unemployed -- and twice as likely to be poor. Economic opportunity without full civil rights means the chance to become taxpayers, but not citizens; it is still taxation without representation. On the other hand, civil rights without economic opportunity means, as Whitney Young has said, "a mouthful of civil rights and an empty dinner table."

The President has charged me with the responsibility of coordinating Federal programs in both these areas. I will exercise every effort to see them move forward in a complementary and constructive manner.

What are the objectives we ultimately seek in this comprehensive, many-sided offensive against the causes and effects of poverty? We seek to elevate one-fifth of our population to the point where they can become full-fledged producers, consumers, purchasers and providers in American society. We want them not only to share in the

benefits of progress, but also to be capable of contributing
more directly to that progress.

↳ The Nation's economy is directly, intensely, ^{and} sense-
lessly affected by this wanton waste of human resources
which we see all about us. ↳ It has been estimated that the
lost production from wasted human resources -- people who do
not produce up to full potential due to the lack of education
or the lack of opportunity -- amounted to \$549 billion from
1953 to the first half of 1964. Thus it is not only true
that we can afford to wage the War on Poverty -- we cannot
afford not to wage it.

↳ But statistics -- however shocking or enlightening --
can never depict the lifelong scars on the individual who
grows up in a racial or an economic ghetto;

--or the long-range consequences of inadequate medical
care and deficient education,

--or the psychological effects of sustained deprivation
and lack of opportunity.

⌈ No geometric curve can adequately demonstrate the
corrosive acid of poverty -- an acid which destroys all in
its path: hope, dignity, faith in oneself, in one's
fellow men, in one's country.

⌈ And in these challenging years we simply cannot afford
to continue freezing out of the mainstream of American life
any potential talent or ability -- no flower can be allowed
to "blush unseen on the desert air."

These, then, are our goals, our tools and our motivations.

But who are our warriors? Let there be no mistake about the
identity of the real field commanders, and the real troops.

⌈ The President has said, "The War against Poverty will not be
won in Washington. It must be won in the field, in every
private home, in every public office, from the courthouse
to the White House."

⌈ Every battle in this war on poverty is being carried
out in large part through the enthusiastic, deeply committed,

volunteered services of men and women from all walks of life,
in every community across this land. The success of the
Community Action Programs, the Neighborhood Youth Corps,
VISTA, the Small Business Development Centers -- indeed,
the success of every aspect of the war on poverty -- depends
upon vigorous, constructive, creative leadership and parti-
cipation by the States, localities and the American public.

Here it is that you can help us. Here it is that the
accumulated wisdom, sensitivity and experience of this
assemblage can be brought to bear. We have neither the

funds, the facilities, nor the personnel to assume this
burden as a solely governmental function -- nor would we
wish to if we could. No war in history was less suited to

conscription as its source of manpower -- or confiscatory
taxation as its source of funds. It must be fought at the
local level. And, with your help, it will.

What can you do? You can disseminate information about
the war on poverty

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the President's program to the organizations and individuals whom you represent.

You can join with us in a mammoth recruitment effort -- Recruit to reach those for whom this program represents an opportunity to serve, and those to whom it represents the last, best hope of survival.

↳ You can help us spark the creation of neighborhood groups and associations, block clubs and community councils to support efforts by the poor to help themselves. ↳ You can spearhead the effort to involve the grass roots leadership of the poor, to develop more leaders and organizations capable of representing the poor.

↳ In your own communities you can provide that special element of personal commitment and concern -- that precious ingredient which is the distillation of years of deep involvement in humanitarian causes. ↳ The impersonal hand of Government, however well-motivated, can never replace the

helping hand of the neighbor.

↳ We will also look to you for the most intensive,
constructive kind of continuing and searching evaluation.

↳ We expect to make mistakes in this program. But the
only way to avoid mistakes is to do nothing -- or to play it
safe. We do not intend to follow either course of action. !

↳ We intend rather to explore, to innovate, to experiment.
And we will not only tolerate criticism; we will welcome it.

↳ It is our intention to support programs only as long as they
contribute to our goal -- helping people to lift themselves
out of poverty and into the mainstream of American economic
and social life.

But ↳ Your contributions should not be limited to evaluation
of steps that we have already taken. ↳ We also will need your
suggestions for the next battles to be waged -- for the new
weapons which must be forged.

For generations, there

has been a gentle tapping at our chamber door. It was the
sound of millions of fellow-citizens -- young and old, North
and South, white and black, seeking to intrude on the smug
and cozy security of American life. They have been, by and
large, faceless, nameless, invisible, and, too often, ignored.

Our countrymen ask to cross this threshold -- not only
to warm their hands by the fire of human kindness -- not only
to sup at the ^{growing} ~~growing~~ board of American affluence -- but also
to contribute...to join in the building of a finer house, a
greater America -- that city on the hill.

The President has opened the door. And the President
has now turned to you -- and to the thousands like you, and
the millions you represent -- to keep that door open, to
assure that it will not be slammed shut again by the drifting
vagaries of uninformed public opinion, or by the wintry blasts
of indifference.

For what is a Nation profited if it shall gain the
whole world, and lose its own soul?

You are here today to launch a crusade whose noble purpose is no less than to help America keep its own soul.

Reel #1

Office of Economic Opportunity

Vice-President Hubert Humphrey

WALTER REUTHER: I'm certain that we all appreciate the fact that we are privileged to have as our principal speaker at this conference the Vice-President of the United States. I think, in a real sense his acceptance of our invitation not only meets our problem but meets his problem because, for Hubert Humphrey to have to be told, as he was told, that he can't make any further speeches on the floor of the Senate is a matter, I'm sure, of some concern. (Laughter) And so our invitation to him not only meets our need at this conference but helps him meet his need because he has to find other platforms, and we are very happy that we are able to make a contribution because I believe we can all agree that we want the voice of Hubert Humphrey to sound loud and clear on the platforms of this country on the great issues that face our society. (Applause.)

Now, when you assemble people who have great concern about what America should be doing about its unfinished work, it is not necessary for the chairman of such a meeting to go into extended remarks about the Vice-President of the United States. I think it most appropriate that the Vice-

President of the United States is the principal speaker here when we are dealing with the problem of human poverty, because Hubert Humphrey has been in the forefront of every struggle to wipe out poverty and social injustice, and there's not been one meaningful struggle for human betterment in which he has not lent his efforts and his spirit in the last 25 years. When the great debate on that great moral issue of civil rights was about to begin on the floor of the United States Senate, all of the people in this country who were concerned about the future of that legislation, who were praying that somehow we could enact meaningful civil rights legislation, were all reassured when they learned that that bill was placed in the competent hands of Hubert Humphrey. (Applause.)

VICE-PRESIDENT HUMPHREY: Thank you very much, Walter, for your generous introduction. I should tell each of the delegates here that I just whispered to Walter that he's getting better on introductions all the time, and I'm so glad that he's exercising this channel of improvement when he introduces me. It's a genuine privilege to be here this morning. I'm sure you recognize that we all have plenty to do these days and, for some reason or other, the hope that was expressed by Walter Reuther that the Vice-President might have an opportunity to speak occasionally

in other forums, since he's been denied the opportunity to speak in the United States Senate--that that hope has been realized again and again and again (laughter). In fact, it's almost gotten more than the Vice-President hoped for. (Laughter) Tomorrow I journey to Des Moines, Iowa, to address Midwest National, I should say, National Conference on Agricultural Policy. It seems like it was just yesterday--I guess it was, as a matter of fact--that I was in Wyoming (laughter) and I flew back--it was Monday night--and we left there at 3:45 A.M. Tuesday morning to fly back so I could attend a meeting at the White House at 10:30 and last evening we had another set of meetings, and then Walter came over to see me yesterday. We had quite a day. I had one meeting after another. I'm not at all sure that we accomplished too much, but I had a number of meetings.

Today I have the privilege of appearing at this citizens' crusade against poverty, and I've looked forward to this meeting. I didn't come here to give you any stirring address. I came here to share some thoughts with you, because you may know I have some limited responsibility for this program of the Economic Opportunity Act and this battle against the ravages of poverty in our nation. I'm delighted that we have here, in Washington, delegates from many many national organizations--non-governmental delegates--men and women that are willing to join up for the duration and to

give us the benefit of your boundless energy, your wide experience, and your great talent.

Now, let me proceed with the discussion of what I believe are some of the tasks before us and what I hope might be an outline of how we can work together. It's always good to quote history, but it's better to make it, and if you make some history, you won't have to study it because you will have been a part of it. You're making some history, and every day of our national existence is another page in some history book somewhere.

In the year of 1620 John Winthrop, later to be the first Governor of Massachusetts, assembled the ~~Pur-~~^{PILGRIMS}~~tans~~ on the deck of that little ship called the Mayflower and told them, and I quote him, "We must consider that we shall be as a city set upon a hill, and the eyes of all people will be upon us." Now the ~~Puritans~~^{PILGRIMS} heard that message while they were yet in the middle of the Atlantic; yet, John Winthrop told them of their special place in history. I'm always amazed, and yet overjoyed, by the fact that these men and women that gave this nation guidance in its early days seemed to be moved by both eloquence and simplicity. They set such high standards and such noble goals that history has recorded their utterances. And John Winthrop was surely one of those that gave us high standards.

Now, relating history to current events, I think it's fair to say that today the eyes of all people, not only here in America, but everywhere, are still upon us. And we are a city on a hill, but our city is not yet complete. Like the ^{PILGRIMS} Puritans, we are still in mid-passage and we cannot continue our journey, nor can we complete our city, until we achieve the proudest goal to which any nation has yet aspired, and that is the goal of equal opportunity for all Americans. The passage of the Economic Opportunity Act was a firm and determined step toward that goal, toward the creation of that city on the hill.

Let me digress from my notes here to say that the one danger that I see in this effort is that so many of us have been engaged so long in so many endeavors that we have lost some of the sparkle, the zest, the effervescence, for getting the job done. And let me also add that if I ever find any of you that do not have that, please get out of our way, because we do not have time for people that have had it. We need people who want it. We need people who are going to get in and work and consider this the first noble experiment, the greatest experiment and experience of their life. And if we can't have people who are that enthusiastic, then the battle has been lost before we start. I guess I'm one of those congenital

optimists. Somebody said the other day that my main weakness was over-exuberance. Well, in this city of Washington, you can't have too much of it, I'll tell you. (Laughter) (Applause)

For some peculiar reason we become a little more weary here in the Nation's Capital about the joy of living and the excitement of modern life than they do elsewhere. When I'm just a little tired--a little overly wrought and concerned--all I need to do is just get away about 50 miles --go to Hagerstown--it will help (laughter) and all at once I begin to feel that people are really excited about something. So, with all due deference to our beautiful Nation's Capital--and it is beautiful--and may I add that those of us that come to it and those of us that live here should try to make this city not only be beautiful in the eye of the viewer, but beautiful also in the heart and spirit of those who live here and work here.

I welcome you today as you come here, then, to offer the Nation your time, your talents, your matchless experience, and your exuberance. We are going to need all of them as we, together, take the next step in our journey and take the next step in the achievement of our goal of equal opportunity. That journey is the eradication of poverty in all of its forms. I think this is one of the most exciting challenges that we've ever had.

Now, the annals of the poor are neither short nor simple in mid-century America, if, indeed, they ever were. An understanding of the dimensions of the problem we face requires not merely our compassion, but comprehension--comprehension of the incomprehensible. To those persons grown accustomed to the face of a smiling America, the facts of poverty are baffling. To understand them requires a realization that in the midst of the richest nation in all history--and this is a topic that would occupy the time and energies of many an orator, telling about our richness--but in the midst of these riches 35,000,000 Americans, almost one fifth of this nation, are poor by the generally accepted standards of our community. We need to realize that the average income of almost 10,000,000 American families in poverty is less than \$1,800 a year. This, then--just these two facts--is the far side of our Paradise. I know we want to get up there and take a look at the other side of the moon, and we're going to do it, but I want to venture this thought, that if we will be willing to put in the same amount of time, energy, and resources in taking a look at and doing something about the other side of our so-called Paradise--the poverty side--we will have achieved a goal and have arrived at an accomplishment that will even be more meaningful than getting a look at all sides of the moon. (Applause)

Now, as the Chairman of the Space Council, I do not want to be misunderstood. (Laughter) I happen to think we can do both. As a matter of fact, I believe Walter Reuther would tell me that you won't have much chance, Mr. Vice-President, of seeing the moon and doing anything about it unless you can do a little bit more about the earth. So they're interrelated, interdependent. I'm not one of these either, you know, this or that fellows. I'm one that believes you can have both--you can have all the good things, if you set yourself to the task.

Now, until recently, the cruelest aspect of poverty in America seemed to be its sheer hopelessness. Somebody said--and it's been repeated throughout history--that the poor are always with us. But someone said the other day the difference is that while the poor are always with us, this is the first time we've been able to do something about the problem. And the fact that we can do something about this situation of the poor and the poverty-stricken makes it all the more imperative that we do something about it. I think it's fair to say that we can forgive our grandfathers and our great-grandfathers and grandmothers for not having done more. They didn't have the means to do it. But you can't forgive this generation because this is the first generation in all of recorded history that can

do something about the scourge of poverty. We have the means to do it. We can banish hunger from the face of the earth. Never before could it be done. We can house those that are poorly sheltered or poorly housed. We can teach the illiterate--we have the means. We can, in fact, help the blind to see, through modern medicine. In other words, all the challenges of Scripture, with few exceptions, can be realized in this generation. So, as a sort of midwestern Fundamentalist, let me say that I don't see much excuse for forgiving people for not doing what they ought to do. We can do it.

For many persons, the future appeared no brighter than the past, as they lived in poverty. And for many persons, even now, in this land of milk and honey, some people appear destined to taste only the bitter dregs of this elixir. It has been demonstrated, for example, that a child born in poverty in an American city is likely to become--I underscore the word "likely," not always, but likely--to become a slow learner, an illiterate, a reject, a dropout, a delinquent, and even a criminal. He is likely to live miserably, die young, and leave no legacy but offspring fated to meet the same ignominious destiny. Now, there is a concise statement of the grave social problems that affect thousands of families in large American cities.

And you people from New York, you read it in your paper everyday. I read it as I pick up the New York newspapers. I read about how they talk about the generations of families that have been on relief, and I'm sick of reading it. I think it's about time we did something about it--kind of old news.

Now, it's both incredible and intolerable that 40% of the families receiving aid for families, from Federal state, or local or voluntary resources, with dependent children--either the father or the mother of those families were raised in families which had also received public assistance. We need to break this vicious cycle of poverty. Our goal must be to free millions of Americans from the bondage of that tragic equation which often decrees that the poor shall beget poor and ignorance shall beget misery. This is why we declared war on poverty. And this is a war to which we are unconditionally committed. It's a war in which we save lives and don't destroy them. It's a war that, rather than to cost you, actually builds for you. But we have to recognize that we have not finally or irrevocably selected our strategy or tactics. The battles are to be fought on largely uncharted terrain where armies have never before clashed. We know, of course, some of the weapons that we've already chosen. But I might add that, just as the military is constantly trying to find new weapons systems to meet

enemies or the threat of aggression, those of us that are engaged in this war better be doing a little research on new weapons systems of how to meet this ancient old enemy, because the old weapons have either been inadequate or too few, because the enemy seems to be with us.

I do know of some of the battles we are now waging. You know, for example, that the President has called for a doubling of the present program levels of the Office for Economic Opportunity. You know of the community action programs. Most of you are involved in them, and by July 1965 we will have funded about 400 local anti-poverty plans and programs, and the 1966 budget will support about 600 such programs. You know of the Job Corps. By July we will be well along toward the training of more than 25,000 youths. I saw the first motion pictures of the opening of the first Job Corps camp, and can I just add that it was a thrilling moment for me when I think that we started to try to get those camps in operation back in 1956, passed the Senate three times, and each time was broken up on the rocks of intolerance and prejudice. At long last, the camps are a reality, and what a joy it was for this man speaking to you now to see fulfillment of a dream. So, when I speak of having 25,000 young people in these camps by July, I must say that this to me is very

very gratifying, but it's only a beginning. By 1966 the Corps will have established more than 100 urban and rural residential centers for young men and women, to give them basic education, skilled training, and sound working experience. You know of the Neighborhood Youth Corps, and by July we will have enrolled more than 175,000 young men and women, and by 1966, in the 1966 budget, we will provide work opportunities for the training of 300,000 youths. And then VISTA, the Volunteers in Service to America. More than 5,000 volunteers will be molded into a domestic Peace Corps. I think this is one of the most exciting adventures of our time--the VISTA program. You ought to be out recruiting people for the VISTA program because it will help your communities, it will help your families, it will help your state, it will help your Nation. In the VISTA program people will have the opportunity to see the fruits of their labor, right there.

I do know of the small business program which, by July, will have disbursed up to \$5,000,000 to very small firms, placing disadvantaged entrepreneurs back on their feet or putting them into business for the first time. I want to commend here Mr. Foley of the Small Business Administration for his courage and his adventuresome spirit in moving out into certain areas where the Small Business

Administration had never before gone to work. Helping in Harlem; helping in some of the neighborhoods in Philadelphia; helping people who were small entrepreneurs who wanted to get in business, who were colored, never had a chance, never received a loan; and yet, the Small Business Administration moves forward, and you will be interested to know that the program, limited as it is, is working well. Those who have obtained some assistance are doing well.

I do know of the work study programs, the adult basic education programs, and all those other weapons in the arsenal which Sargent Shriver and his dedicated associates are so carefully and conscientiously administering. I think we'll have to change Sargent Shriver's name to General Shriver. (Laughter) I don't think a sergeant can just take care of all of this. But be this as it may, he has a tremendous array of forces, and he's putting them to work. But you also understand that the programs contained in the Economic Opportunity Act of 1964 cannot provide the total answer. They represent only several combat teams or several divisions in the army that must be recruited to achieve total victory in this war.

The President has noted that poverty has many roots, but the taproot is ignorance. Today two thirds of the families headed by those with less than a grammar school education

live in poverty. Our education program, therefore, must be an integral part of a nation-wide attack on the causes and the effects of poverty. The causal relationship here is established. It just goes almost without repeating it that those who have been denied the opportunities of education or for some reason didn't take advantage of those opportunities of education--those people today represent the hard core of the enemy of poverty. They're the ones, and when I think of how little it takes to do something in education as compared to what it takes to do something in modern scientific weapons of so-called regular warfare, I'm amazed that we haven't been at the task a lot sooner.

The President's proposal for medical care for the aged is inseparably tied to the war on poverty. The median income of families headed by persons over 65 years of age is less than \$3,000, and I want to point out that just as Franklin Roosevelt once identified certain unemployed in our country as the "forgotten man," or the "forgotten men," the forgotten people in all too many communities today are the elderly. If we can find attics, or little homes to put them aside, to get them out of sight, some people think that the problem has been overcome. This is merely blinding oneself to reality. A society that is worth surviving is one that offers opportunity to

its young and one that offers care to its elderly. If you can't offer opportunity to the young and care to the elderly and rehabilitation to the maimed and the crippled, then you are an immoral society, and that's the kind of immorality that ought to worry us. (Applause)

So it is with the Appalachia program. The minimum wage, unemployment insurance, and area redevelopment--all are joined by a common thread--the determination to offer to every American, old or young, wherever situated, however engaged, the opportunity to share fully and freely in the fruits of American progress. I'd like to repeat this because, Walter, this is what we've been talking about for 25 years. This is what Franklin Roosevelt talked to this Nation about better than 30 years ago, when he was calling for a New Deal, not for himself, not merely for the economy, but for every American. And we're still engaged now in the realization of many of the goals of that period. No two programs could more clearly demonstrate this determination and this interrelationship that I've spoken of than the Economic Opportunity Act and the Civil Rights Act. Negro Americans today are twice as likely to be illiterates, twice as likely to be unemployed, and twice as likely to be poor as other Americans.

Economic opportunity without full civil rights means the chance to become taxpayers but not citizens. It

is still taxation without representation, and there's far too much of that in this country--far too much. And may I say, we intend to do something about it in this Congress. (Applause)

On the other hand, civil rights without economic opportunity means, as Whitney Young has said, a mouthful of civil rights and an empty dinner pail. So we're not going to try to make choices--we're going to have both economic opportunity and the full rights of citizenship. The President has charged me with the responsibility of coordinating federal programs in both of these areas. That's why I'm here this morning, and I will exercise every effort to see these programs move forward in a complementary and constructive manner. It is my view that the key to accomplishment in the field of civil rights in many areas is the Economic Opportunity Act.

We can talk about people without even mentioning civil rights and obtain full Constitutional human rights, and the key to the fulfillment of the civil rights objectives, or I should say the economic opportunity objectives in many areas is in implementing civil rights. So if we put the two together

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Reel #2

Office of Economic Opportunity

Vice-President Hubert Humphrey

...one-fifth of our population to the point where they can become full-fledged producers, consumers, purchasers, and providers in the American society. We want them to share in not only the benefits of progress but also to be capable of contributing more directly to that progress. And, my fellow Americans, when you can put good morals and good economics in the same package, you have a winner.

This poverty which has gripped us is the greatest drag on our economy of any one single economic and social development. The elimination of poverty is not only good for the poor, it's good for the rich. It's not only good for the unemployed, it's good for the employed. It's not only good for the person that receives the benefits, it's good for the automobile industry, Walter, and it's good for the drug industry, and it's good for a lot of other things. When you can put together moral commitment and economic opportunity, you have a program that should rally the support of millions of people.

Let me speak a little bit about the economy. The nation's economy is directly, intensely, and senselessly affected by this wanton waste of human resources which we see all about us. I look upon this anti-poverty program as

a great conservation program. I've always supported our endeavors in the conservation of land, water, and minerals and forests. I've been a Teddy Roosevelt-Governor Pinchot type of conservationist. But today we're engaged in a broader program of conservation, a program of the conservation and development of human resources. That's what the Civil Rights program is about, that's what the Economic Opportunity Act is about, that's what most of this legislative program is about.

It has been estimated that the lost production from wasted human resources--people who do not produce up to full potential due to lack of education, due to prejudice, due to lack of opportunity--amounted to \$549,000,000,000 from the first half of 1953 to the first half of 1964. Now, that is the estimate of the President's Council of Economic Advisors. \$549,000,000,000 of lost income. What could we have done with that in this world and this America? Thus it is not only true that we can afford to wage the war on poverty, the truth is that we cannot afford not to wage it. But the statistics, however shocking or enlightening, can never depict the lifelong scars on the individual who grows up in racial or in economic ghettos, or the long range consequences of inadequate medical care and deficient education, or the psychological effects of sustained deprivation and

lack of opportunity. No geometric curve can adequately demonstrate the corrosive acid of poverty, an acid which destroys all in its path--hope and dignity, faith in oneself, in one's fellow man, and in one's country. In these challenging years we simply cannot afford to continue freezing out of the mainstream of American life any potential talent or ability. No flower can be allowed to blush unseen on the desert air. These, then, are our goals, our tools and our motivations, but who are our warriors? Let there be no mistake about the identity of the real field commanders and the real troops. The President said the war against poverty will not be won in Washington. It must be won in the field--in every private home, in every public office, from the courthouse to the White House. Therefore, every battle in this war on poverty is being carried on, in a large part, through the enthusiastic, deeply committed, volunteered services of men and women from all walks of life in every community across this land. The success of the community action programs, the Neighborhood Youth Corps, VISTA, the Small Business Development Centers--indeed, the success of every aspect of the war on poverty depends on vigorous, constructive, creative leadership and participation by individuals, by voluntary groups, by states and localities, and the American public. And here it is that you can help us.

- I noted yesterday--and I have a copy of the telegram sent by Mr. Shriver to the American Bar Association--where the American Bar Association passed a resolution calling upon the legal profession to enlarge the availability of legal services offered to the poor. This is an example of new effort and of helpfulness, and I want to join Mr. Shriver in commending the American Bar Association on volunteering their professional services in this war. I said that this is something that we must all engage in. We must remember that we have neither the funds, the facilities, nor the personnel to assume this burden as solely a governmental function. Nor would we wish to if we could. No war in history was less suited for conscription as its source of manpower, or confiscatory taxation for its source of funds than this war on poverty. Our war must be fought at the local level and, with your help, it will be fought there.

Now, what can you do? You can disseminate information about the President's program to the organizations and individuals whom you represent. I am shocked and amazed how little people know about what we're trying to do. You know, there is so much news that people don't get any of it. It's sort of like being overfed. You're never hungry. This is one of the real problems that we have today in the field

of public education. There is just a constant barrage of news and there's so much of it most people just reject it out of hand. Therefore, you're going to have to really be ingenious to get the message of what this program is all about and what you can do about it to the people of your community. You can join with us in a mammoth recruitment effort to reach those for whom this program represents an opportunity to serve and those to whom it represents the last best hope of survival. You can help us spark the creation of neighborhood groups and associations and block clubs and community councils to support efforts by the poor to help themselves; and you can tell the people in your own community that they don't need to look at the poor in Philadelphia. If you live in Peoria, just look at Peoria; or if you live in Minneapolis you don't need to talk about the poor in Cleveland, we have some in Minneapolis.

If we can just get people to try to wage the war where they know the terrain, where they can identify the enemy, where they've watched the enemy day in and day out, and declare war in that community, we will start to win the total victory that we seek. In your own communities you can provide that special element of personal commitment and concern, that precious ingredient which is the distillation of years of deep involvement in humanitarian causes. The impersonal hand

of government, however well motivated, can never replace the helping hand of the neighbor. And might I add here that when you start to identify the problem at home, name names, name places. I can recall when I was the mayor of my city of Minneapolis, I used to go down and speak to young people's groups in the southwestern part of our city. It was the higher income level area of the city--the upper middle income and the high income area--the best schools, beautiful churches, finest country club--they had all that was great. Every time I'd go there they'd want to talk about China. (Laughter) Or they'd want to talk about Africa. One time I went to this young people's group--it was at the Mayflower Congregational Church--and I said, "How many of you have been up on the other side of Olson Boulevard?" "Olson Boulevard? Where's that?" Oh, they knew about Shanghai and they were strong on Hong Kong (laughter) but to get on the other side of Olson Boulevard where we had poverty, or to get up on Madison Avenue where many of our Chippewa Indian people lived in abject poverty--never been there.

Travel the world. Discuss the world problems, but never come to grips with the one right back in your neighborhood within ten minutes by automobile. Well, I'm happy to say that I shouted long enough, that's where I started becoming rather noisy and we finally got something done

about it. What I guess I'm trying to say is that when we speak of government being impersonal, it isn't good enough to identify the Federal Government as an impersonal entity unless you're going to make yourself personal about the problems in your area. So when you leave Washington and go home, remember there are people here in Washington who will be taking care of the problems in Washington. You take care of the problems where you live, and then we'll add it all up, and I wouldn't be a bit surprised but what Washington then will be able to claim some success if you don't fail in the task that you are to undertake.

Now, we will also look to you in this room for a kind of constructive and continuing searching evaluation of the program, and I want to underscore the importance of this. We're going to make some mistakes--in fact, we expect to. But the only way, of course, to avoid mistakes is to do nothing or, as some people say, to play it safe, and we do not intend to follow either course of action. We intend, rather, to explore, to innovate, to experiment, and we will not only tolerate criticism, we will welcome it. And I might add, we're expecting it, because the minute that you innovate, the minute that you experiment, the minute that you seek to be creative, you can rest assured that the forces of reaction and the forces of the status quo will say this is dangerous--won't work. My answer to

them is that what you've been doing hasn't been working either, so we start on an even basis. You've been a failure and we apparently are going to be one, so let's all move together and see if we can do something about our lives. I'm an innovator. Remember this--I saw in the paper the other day where the New York Yankees had signed up Mickey Mantle, I believe for \$102,000. That's more than you earn, Walter. (Laughter) That's more than I earn. Very discouraging. Much more than I earn, and more than I get--together, yes (laughter). Now, I want to be very clear about this again. I think Mickey Mantle is a great fellow and if I were the Manager of the Yankees I'd want to hire him, too. As one that comes from the Twin Cities I'm not so sure the Yankees ought to have him, but Mickey Mantle gets, let's say, approximately \$100,000, if press reports are correct. Well, what was his batting average? About--well, if he hits 350, he's doing good. If he gets a hit once out of every three times at bat--now I want the Economic Opportunity Program to do much better than that. We expect to have Mickey Shriver do a whole lot better than that. (Laughter) But what I'm saying is, that we do not expect to always be able to hit the ball out of the park, but we're going to be up there swinging. If we keep missing the ball, we're going to find out why. We expect some people

to say that we haven't done our job well. As long as we accept that criticism as a challenge and don't go around sulking, we'll be all right. So I want you to help evaluate this program. I want you to be a constructive critic of this program. I want you to offer your suggestions--don't go around mumbling to yourself. You're a poor listener--to yourself. Speak out loud to us and let us hear what you think ought to be done. If you're going to criticize what we're doing, have an alternative. I haven't ever really enjoyed meeting these people that sit in the bleachers and tell the coach and the captain and the team what they ought to be doing on the field, but never have the guts to get down and put on the uniform and get out in the field themselves. So if you're going to be a Monday morning quarterback, at least be willing to sit on the bench on Saturday afternoon in case we should need you.

Now, your contribution should not be limited to evaluation of steps which have already been taken. We'll need your suggestions for the next battles to be waged, for the new weapons which must be forged. I'm sure you recall many of the critics of World War II military strategy insofar as the French were concerned, and you could have criticized anyone. They said the French generals had corrected for World War II all the mistakes they had made in

World War I. Mr. De Gaulle, himself, was the sharpest critic of French defensive and offensive military strategy. Now, I want to be sure that we're not only trying to look over the past and see what mistakes were made yesterday-- what are our tactics and strategy for the future?

For generations there has been a gentle tapping at our chamber door. It was the sound of millions of fellow citizens, young and old, north and south, white and black. It's the sound of these citizens seeking to intrude on the snug and cozy security of American life. They have been, by and large, faceless, nameless, invisible, and, too often, ignored. Our countrymen ask to cross this threshold, not only to warm their hands by the fire of human kindness, not only to sup at this groaning board of American affluence, but also our fellow Americans ask to contribute, to join with the rest of us in building a finer house, a greater America, a city on the hill. The goal of the Great Society, my dear friends, is not one that is to be achieved just by the few, or for the few. The Great Society is one in which there will be a place for everyone, and the Great Society can only be achieved if everyone, to the best of his or her ability, makes some contribution to it. We Americans have to understand the difference between bigness and greatness, between wealth and a rich and beautiful life.

Our President and the leaders of our country are now asking that America give some attention to the quality of its life, to the meaning of it, to the soul and the spirit of American life, and not just to its adornment or its luxury. I believe that at this time of our history, when we've been privileged to be a richer nation than any other nation on the face of the earth, we need to make it crystal clear that this richness is not merely for the perpetuation of luxury, but rather for the achievement of justice. I believe that at a time when we are the strongest nation on the face of the earth we need to make it manifestly clear that this strength is not for conquest, not for war-like ambitions, but rather for the blessings of peace and the good and the meaningful life.

The President of the United States has sounded a clarion call to the best that's in us. I want to say that I don't recall any time in the history of our country when there have been more noble goals outlined for the American people than in recent days. Everything from the beautification of the terrain, of the surface of America, to the enrichment of the life and the soul and the spirit of Americans. It's here. We've been challenged to great economic growth. We've been challenged to the fulfillment of full civil rights. We've been challenged to beautify our cities,

our homes, our neighborhoods, and our highways; to conserve our great natural resources. We've been challenged to bring the possibility of enlightenment and education to every boy or girl who wants an education. What a wonderful period in which to live! How great it is to live at a time in human history when the major challenge is to the better life, rather than to a quicker death!

So, I'm very proud to be a part of an administration that, in its own way, is asking the American people to do something about themselves. We're not going to do it from the Office of Economic Opportunity. We're not going to remake America from the White House or the Congress. We can establish standards. We can issue the call to action. We can sign the papers. We can join with you in the blueprint, but the war will be won by the volunteers--the people at home, the people in the localities, the people in the church, the cathedral, the synagogue, the union, the trade association, the community council, the youth groups. If ever there was a time when there was a revitalization of the democratic spirit, it's now. The question is, will we answer that call? I think we can. We might well ask ourselves, for what is a nation profited if it shall gain the whole world and lose its soul? And we're really talking this morning about soul. We're talking about the things

that we've been taught through the years of our lives. At long last, it is a matter of public policy to make personal commitment public policy, to take the teachings of the great men of history, the teachings of the prophets, and make them the realities of the citizens.

For you here today, there's a great opportunity beckoning you. You're here to launch a crusade and, believe me, this country needs one--a crusade whose noble purpose is no less than to help America keep its own soul. In that crusade, I volunteer. I join you. I'm in the ranks and, believe me, you'll have to step fast or I'll be out in front.

Thank you very much. (Applause)

WALTER REUTHER: Members of the National Committee, we have worked to make that as representative and broadly based as possible. Following the election of the National Committee, we are ... (Applause)

Following the election of the National Committee, we will hear a very brief statement by Sargent Shriver, the Director of the Economic Opportunities Program. He can only come for a few minutes. If the time permits, we might have Mr. Conway--Mr. Jack Conway--who's working with Mr. Shriver, answer questions. If time does not permit, we will move on because we want to finally wind up as the final item of the agenda a broad general discussion of specific kinds of

projects that you want the National Committee to consider as we begin to get into action. We also need to set up at the National Committee--and we're hopeful of getting a start tonight--three commissions, and we're going to pass out little cards, and if any of you are interested in being a part of any of these three commissions, we would like to have you indicate that so that when we try to assemble the membership of these various commissions, we will have the benefit of your desires.

Now those three commissions are the following: one dealing with public information and education. This is the broad problem of disseminating information, of doing as effective a job as possible of raising the level of public understanding--what we're trying to do--being a clearing house. There are many organizations waging continuous struggle on some narrow aspect of the poverty program, and they work so lonely and in such total isolation. We want to be a clearing house so we can get the sort of things they're doing and the information they publish out to everyone. These are the sorts of things we can do.

Now the second commission will deal with national programs and policies. In other words, this will be the commission that will have the responsibility of coming up with new programs, new policies, both for private non-governmental action and for governmental action. This

would be the commission that would work primarily in the area that Vice-President Humphrey has suggested. It's very refreshing to have a person in government say, "We'll do our best, but we know we won't do well enough, and your task is to help us find a better way to do it." This commission will be working in this broad area.

The final commission will deal with community activity and organization. Now, the word "organization" there also is based on the understanding of the executive committee discussion last evening. We believe it is not sufficient for the assault against human poverty to be based upon a kind of glorified welfare program attitude. We believe the poor and disadvantaged must be involved in this struggle, and we have got to find ways of creating the mechanisms and the organizations that will draw in active participation in this great struggle and crusade the people who are the victims of poverty. This committee dealing with community activity will deal with the broad areas of community activity and this other aspect of the problem--how we make people who are the victims of poverty a part of this great crusade so that they will have a sense of self-help in this struggle.

Now, we will pass out the (do you have the cards ready? Are the cards being distributed? Very good.) I ask

you to indicate your preference. Now, you will find that the wording on the cards indicates that there are four commissions. The Executive Committee is recommending that we consolidate the last two into one. That committee will be called "Community Activity and Organization."

What is your pleasure concerning the tentative agenda that I have suggested?

It has been moved and supported that we approve the agenda. Are there any comments? If not, all signify by saying, "Aye." (Chorus of "ayes") Opposed? So ordered.

Copies of the constitution are being distributed.

(Background conversation inaudible)

I'd like to announce that there's a message for Mr. Eugene Johnson. If you will come to the platform, we'll give you the message.

We'll just wait a minute so everyone will have a copy of the proposed constitution.

Yes. Could we ask the television people to cooperate. I don't think you are making any film of the discussion of the constitution and by-laws, and if you would be kind enough to turn the lights out, it would be much more convenient. We can't see the people that are in this section over here. If you reduce the cord of the microphone, it might be helpful.

Does everyone now have a copy of the proposed by-laws? Will you please hold your hands up so we can see where we need additional copies?

While we're waiting, I'd like to introduce two people who have been very helpful in getting our work underway: Rabbi Richard Hirsch, Director of the Religion Action Center of the Union of Hebrew Congregations, who has been acting as the secretary of our group. Rabbi Hirsch. (Applause) Mr. Clyde Ellis, who's Executive Director of the National Rural Electrical Cooperative Association. Mr. Ellis. He's the treasurer. (Applause) These two gentlemen will be in charge of our money, if we get any.

Are we all set now on the distribution of the by-laws? These proposed by-laws are the product of the effort of the Executive Committee. We had a draft proposal which, last evening, the Executive Committee spent, I think, at least $2\frac{1}{2}$ hours going over, section by section, article by article, and I think that we ought to proceed with the discussion of these by-laws with a clear understanding that this organization essentially is a voluntary association

end of tape



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