

Mr. Aaron Meyer
Mrs. Geneva Mathewson

Put my pen away
coffee consumed!

Miss Randall
Don Terry

EXCERPTS OF ADDRESS

PREPARED FOR DELIVERY

BY

HONORABLE HUBERT H. HUMPHREY

VICE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES

NATIONAL COUNCIL ON THE AGING

14TH ANNUAL MEETING

MONDAY, MARCH 1, 1965

SHOREHAM HOTEL, WASHINGTON, D.C.

Mr. Larson Meyer - President
Mrs. Geneva Mathewson

It is a privilege to address the National Council
on Aging, a great resource for the Great Society.

This Nation needs the National Council more than
at any previous time in your almost decade and a half
of service.

You of this audience possess the varied ~~competences~~ ^{talents}
we need as we seek to construct a more promising future
for the elderly citizens of America. Your professional
skills, your proven record of community and national
leadership are admired, applauded, and welcomed.

I have re-read your record of accomplishment. It
is a diverse, full, and fruitful record.

Your research - your studies
~~The studies which you have conducted~~ have broken
new ground, stimulated new thinking and given insight
into many problems which have heretofore been little

understood.

and, Your demonstration projects have successfully

nursing homes
housing
senior citizens
centers
- custodial care.

tested new techniques of serving the elderly. Your

seminars and Institutes have had stimulating effects for

good -- in industry, in Government, and among non-

profit organizations.

and -- In a world calling for deeds --- now -- you have
launched action programs.

But you have also kept our sights fixed on sound,
long-range targets.

TH

↳ Elderly Americans face the most rapidly changing
environment of their lifetimes. They need our help to
adjust to these changes.

↳ The greatest technological revolution in history is
altering every aspect of living.

✓ America is being urbanized and suburbanized. { *automated automobiles*

✓ Patterns are changing in employment, schooling,

housing, transportation, shopping, medicine, recreation.

industrial
The new technologies are having massive effects on our

entire society - solving some problems, but creating others.

✓ And our population is changing. Paradoxically, we are getting to be an older, as well as a younger people.

{ 50% of our
Pop. will be
under 25 by
1970

✓ The 18 million of our citizens who are over 65 today

will become 21 million in 1970.

(X) *disproportionate
number of elderly
in smaller
towns -
Rural
Areas!*

But - The 1 in 10 of our population who are Senior Citizens

now bear far more than 1/10th the burden of medical,

economic, and other problems. But, they also offer far

more than 1/10th the wisdom and experience which this

Nation can tap to meet the challenges of tomorrow.

L Agencies of the U.S. Government recognize these facts. This is why they are reaching out to you and through you -- for ideas, counsel, information,

That is why I hope -- and believe -- that this Convention will be but an opening phase of a continuing dialogue between you and leaders in the field of the Aging, and the Federal Government -- the Executive Branch and the Congress.

L You will recall that, by virtue of its magnificent record, the 88th Congress because known as the

for Education.
"Education Congress" History may record the 89th Congress as the *"Congress for the Senior Citizen"* "Justice Congress." This would be

due to the full legislative program which the Senate and House may -- and I believe will -- adopt on behalf

+ concern
of justice for the elderly.

Foremost of such landmark actions will be the
enactment of Medicare this year. The King-Anderson

Bill will enable all of us to pre-pay -- in the sound

American tradition -- for hospital, nursing home and *visiting*
nurse visits
~~medical home visits~~ after we reach 65.

X { Medicare is, ~~we believe~~, the cornerstone of sound
X { Health
X { ~~medical~~ economics for the elderly, { It will complement
X { Old Age Assistance, Kerr-Mills aid, private insurance
X { and private savings. *medical* } *not replace but supplement!*
X { *It is a supplement not to supplant!*

Another legislative action we anticipate by the 89th

Congress is liberalized Old Age and Survivors Insurance

benefits. This is just and needed.

89th Congress
Then, too, by the close of the /, we hope to enact a
comprehensive bill covering many needs for our elderly.

*Passed in
89th.*

It would provide matching grants to help strengthen
community planning and coordination for health, social,
employment, recreational, educational, and other services;
facilitate research grants and contracts; help in construction
of new work opportunity and recreation centers, as well as
stimulate employment opportunities.

The Congress is providing added resources for another
vital effort -- the War against Poverty. And how vital to
the welfare of our elderly a successful war on poverty can
be! The anti-poverty program is, of course, part of an
even larger war on the home front -- the struggle for
human dignity, the war against every enemy which crushes
the spirit of man.

And what else is the "war" for? What are our other
affirmative goals? They are many.

Concern, Develop
Human
Resources

most of
Elderly
are
Poor!

✓ The Great Society seeks to facilitate ^{+ productive} great lives
for its people -- lives profound with meaning, lives
which fulfill noble objectives -- for ourselves, our
loved ones, our community, and our Nation.

The poet, Robert Browning, once wrote:

"Life has meaning, and to find its
meaning is my meat and drink."

President Johnson has urged additional actions
to bring us

"closer to that time when elderly people
generally can enjoy the independence and
sense of purpose and accomplishment that
are their due."

"A sense of purpose and accomplishment" has been
lacking for too long for too many millions of our aging,
for reasons beyond their control.

For too long, as you so well know, "over 65"
has meant "over the hill to the poor house." Even for
those better off, retirement has too often involved
"Retirement Shock." Years which should have been

"golden" have too often been of a different hue -- "gray"
with boredom, or "black" in "a long night" of disease,
despair and destitution.

 This audience has helped to change that. ~~You~~
~~have pioneered in enlightened new programs.~~ You have
helped guide American Society to remember the forgotten
and to fulfill a wide variety of their needs.

 I urge you to continue and expand your efforts.
Help us wage this "war" for human good on still more
fronts in greater depth and with higher effectiveness.

Let me mention just a few of these fronts.

-- On the economic front, help us to devise ways
and means which will assure to elderly citizens sufficient

income to facilitate independent living -- through Social Security payments, through sound private pension plans, through opportunity -- if our citizens so wish -- for a

Second Career.

Specifically, on the job front, help us to achieve our goals such as combatting discrimination against the elderly, providing -- the opportunity for full-time, part-time, or volunteer employment.

Prejudice

-- On the housing front, help us to enable the elderly to live in comfortable accommodations -- apartments or homes, suitable to their needs, at reasonable financial cost, and with the standards that the great housing industry, non-profit organizations, and Federal agencies can help provide.

vital need.

└-- On the education front, enable us to provide expanded opportunities for lifetime learning, including vocational studies.

└ On the recreation front -- help us to enable the elderly to gain new ~~vocational~~ skills and interests and strengthen old ones, to increase their enjoyment of the arts and crafts, to encourage them, if they are so inclined, to travel, to enjoy games and to "have a wonderful time."

└-- On the community front -- help us develop new means to enable the elderly to make their maximum contribution in civic life -- in political work, in community centers, in the work of service agencies like VISTA, at home, or youth agencies, child-care centers, and in agencies like the Peace Corps abroad.

Volunteers
In Service
to America
229,707 Volunteers
are over 60-
years of age
at St. Petersburg

↳ This Administration proposes to do this and more. For example, on the medical research front, we will reinforce scientific studies to unravel mysteries of the aging process itself, as well as to unlock riddles of such mass killers and crippers as heart disease, mental illness, arthritis, neurological disorders and cancer.

Geriatrics!

↳ With the approval of the Congress, we will set up great Regional Medical Centers. These Centers will "translate" latest research discoveries -- on cancer, heart disease and strokes -- into the most advanced services of patient care for every area of our land.

make
info +
care
available
to all.

↳ We will expand the numbers of healing arts man-
power to staff new and modernized institutions -- hospitals,
nursing homes and other facilities.

In so doing, we will stress preventive, not just curative and restorative medicine. This Nation, I believe, needs "Well Clinics," just as it needs clinics for sickness. ~~I would like to see more people in the former than in the latter.~~

↳ Creative innovations are needed in every area of service of the elderly. Already, in the physical sciences, massive innovations have transformed the world of matter. One great advance has been in "Systems Engineering." It has achieved near miracles in solution of complex, urgent, rapidly changing problems of national defense. It has been indispensable, too, in conquest of Outer Space.

We need "Systems Engineering" for the elderly in their changing environment. In the behavioral sciences, the widest variety of skills -- medicine, psychology, sociology, anthropology, education and many others -- must be blended -- not just to meet part of the needs -- but for the totality of needs of the elderly. Computer science can help greatly in this process. It will help us develop models which can manipulate heretofore unfathomable numbers of variables in varying combinations.

↳ New concepts must be -- and are being -- considered by official Agencies and by some leading private sources. I refer to but two: -- Fellowships in the Aging and Regional Laboratories for the Aging.

Already, there are Fellowships in medicine and in each of the other sciences. Through the National Institutes of Health, we will be in a position to offer Fellowships for a combination of skills in all the sciences -- medical and others -- which involve the elderly.

There are great Laboratories ^(center) for the study of the Atom -- of Space -- of Matter. Similarly, Regional Laboratories to study the problems of men ~~and~~ women of advanced years will be in the National and international interest.

Every neighborhood, every community is in a certain sense a social laboratory. The Nation should do more honor to the communities which achieve greater success in serving the elderly. An "E" ^{communities,} for Excellence in serving the Aging should honor [^] companies, unions, Universities, voluntary organizations. Yes, we must break new ^{and} intellectual ground -- in services for the elderly. [^] By "we" I mean -- just that -- all of us -- a creative partnership of Government, industry, labor,

education, Foundations, voluntary agencies and
others.

Let no one over-rely ^{on} -- nor expect "cure-alls"
^{namely,}
from one source -- the Federal Government.

But, let no one under-estimate the will of the
U. S. Government to play its fullest role, consistent
with meeting ~~wits~~ obligations, in serving the elderly.

Time is precious. The time to put our ideas
on the "launching pad" is now.

We must experiment, demonstrate, and innovate.

~~We are a Nation of doers, a Nation of builders.~~ We are

~~a~~ a Nation of thinkers and planners. We must become

more so. But, we are also a nation of doers,
a nation of builders

"Give us men to match our mountains" is a motto of the great American West.

In ancient times, it was said,

"There were giants on the earth in those days."

We need -- today and tomorrow -- for service for the elderly -- giants of intellect, giants of understanding, giants of leadership.

The National Council on Aging is well endowed with such talent.

✓ The President and I are grateful for this Organization, grateful for what you are, for what you represent, for what you will be, and what you will do.

✓ ^{best} My ~~warmest~~ wishes for a great Convention in service of the Great Society.

3/1/65

Aging

[Transcript]

_____: Ladies and gentlemen, while the Vice President is having a sip of coffee, I'd like to welcome you to this, our 14th Annual Meeting of the National Council on the Aging.

The theme of our meeting is "The Older American in the Great Society" and it is, therefore, particularly fitting and appropriate, of course, that this meeting be held in our nation's capital.

We have progressed beyond the day when the problems of older people were regarded as something apart from the problems of the whole society. We must develop services and facilities to meet the needs of ALL age groups, and we must intertwine these services - carefully, of course, weighing priorities but yet neglecting no one group.

What is confronting us today is not confined to youth alone but is being felt by the old in tens of thousands of homes and families across the land. Community after community is startled by the realization that a large proportion of its people are over 65 and in need of guidance. The Great Society involves all groups and includes everyone by the simple virtue that he is a human being. We may differ about the means of reaching this goal and we may differ on the specific ingredients, but we are all in agreement, I am sure, that everyone be included. We are in agreement that no Great Society

can exist where large segments remain isolated and insulated from the Society around it.

While the National Council on the Aging has done a great deal of spade work in calling attention to this all-conclusive nature of our Society, we have nonetheless emphasized our particular concern working with and for the older person to help him overcome inertia that wastes time when time should be utilized, to help him combat the complex forces that bring apathy when there should be vigor and brightness of mind, to help him halt those forces that imply defeat and degradation when there should be victory and pride.

The National Council on the Aging is committed to define more clearly the problemaries and to develop reasonable, workable and practical solutions. The National Council on the Aging through its comprehensive support in time and talent from all walks of life... support from business, support from labor, from education and religious groups, and from government... stands as a nationally recognized, broadly-based, voluntary agency, to which diverse interests turn for directive judgment, creative thinking and resource material... to assist in planning programs and policy for the elderly.

We have insisted on bringing to the front some real problems, problems of housing, of retirement, of retraining, of income and of health, of institutional care, of social service and of recreation. We have suggested methods of approaching and meeting these problems - professionally, to be sure - and yet, with passion and with empathy, and with a sense of our nation as a single entity.

Much has been accomplished since early evidence made apparent the growing magnitude of problems of a nation of older persons... a great deal more must be done.

We regard this Annual Meeting as a continuation of our effort and I am hopeful (as I know you are)... that when we have concluded our discussions, both formal and informal, we will have filled in some of the outlines of our work in the year ahead and crystallized some of the additional goals.

I notice our guest has just put his pen away, which means he has made his corrections in his Presentation, his coffee is about empty, so now let me turn to my immediate task and it's a pleasure... a pleasant task, indeed, of the afternoon.

I use the word "task" advisedly, for as I have thought over this matter, I suddenly realized one of the very difficult jobs in the City of Washington is the introduction of the Vice President of the United States. This is not, let me hasten to add, that there are not a great many nice things that could be said about Vice President Humphrey. Indeed, it is because of this, because there are so many, MANY nice things that can and SHOULD be said and, furthermore, that have already been said. And I'm sure you agree with me when I say that I pray they will continue to be said for many, many, many years to come.

It is indicative of the passion that Vice President Humphrey has for humanity that he is so generous of his time and thought. It is indicative of the sheer zest that he has for the world of public affairs that he is willing to participate in any event that holds promise for

bettering the lot of people. And one of the great assets of Vice President Humphrey is his capacity for transmitting that passion and zest to the rest of us.

Ladies and gentlemen, it is a privilege and indeed an honor for me to present to you the Vice President of the United States, The Honorable Hubert H. Humphrey. (APPLAUSE)

VICE PRESIDENT HUMPHREY: Thank you very much. Thank you very much, Mr. Meyer, and members of the Officers and Board of the National Council of the Aging... and my fellow Americans.

I just had a little side conversation here with Garson Meyer... I said you were with Kodak, weren't you, and he said, yes, and I knew it... because any man who has as sharp an eye as this man... (LAUGHTER)... he has sort of what I call "wide-range lens." (LAUGHTER) I was sitting over here jotting down a little note or two - trying to make this speech at least somewhat worthy of your attention - and here he's looking straight out but he's seeing me off here to his right a little. And Miss Randall said to me, "Watch out for that fellow." (LAUGHTER)

Doctor Carey, it's very good to see you again and all of the fine, distinguished public servants and civic-minded people here.

I had a chance to say hello to Mrs. Mathewson and I know what wonderful work this fine lady does for this organization and how well she represents you.

I am delighted to be invited to this occasion, as a matter of fact. I can think of no group that has more important work to perform and I can think of no place for you better to go to work than right here in the nation's Capital. And I find that one of the duties of a Vice President, or shall I say one of the privileges, is to meet with nice people. This is really the joy of my job. There have been many things written about this position of Vice President... (LAUGHTER)

I thought maybe you'd like to know how much I enjoy it! (LAUGHTER AND APPLAUSE) I tell the President that everyday, too, so he keeps me right on. (LAUGHTER)

The theme of our government and of this Administration and I think of our country is this theme of the Great Society. It's been referred to here by your President and the National Council represents a tremendous resource for the achievement of the goals of the Great Society. And I do appreciate so much, Mr. Meyer, that you've emphasized that the Great Society doesn't just appeal or have its programs for one group. The Great Society represents all of us and everyone is included in it.

So today even though we may concentrate our attention primarily upon the needs and the challenges of the aging or of the elderly or of the senior citizen, everyone is included and each and every group has a role to play.

You of this audience possess many of the talents and the competences that we need as we seek to construct a more promising future for this group that we call the elderly, or the senior citizen, of America. Your professional skill - and you have it - and your proven record of community and national leadership - and you have it - all of these are much admired, and applauded, and I'm here to extend an official "Thank You" and we surely welcome what you do.

I've had the chance to read and, in fact, re-read the record of your accomplishment, and it's a fruitful record and a diverse one. Your research - if you had done nothing else but that - would

earn the plaudits, or merit the plaudits, of the American people.

But your research and your studies, they've broken new ground, stimulated new thinking, and given insight into many problems relating to the relationship of the senior citizen to his fellow citizen and his community... new ground and new insights that I think were long overdue.

And your demonstration projects. And I want to comment just a minute on these... what you might call pilot projects, or demonstration projects, in housing, in senior citizen centers, in custodial care... your criteria for nursing homes... if you'd never done anything more, that in itself would have been a service almost beyond the call of duty.

These demonstration projects have successfully demonstrated new techniques of serving the elderly. You've moved away from theory into practice, and your seminars and your Institutes have had stimulating effects for the good of all, for good in government and industry and in the non-profit organizations.

And you live in a time when we need deeds, in a world calling for deeds now - you have launched these action programs - now.

You're not just talking about the future, you're doing something about the problems of the day.

But I must also note that you've kept your sights properly fixed on these long-range targets.

Now just a word about the times in which we live. Everybody, of course, talks about these days. They're filled with change and sometimes almost frightful change, but at best rapid change.

And elderly Americans face the most rapidly changing environment of their lifetimes. And this is possibly why they need more help now than any other time.

The greatest technological revolution in history is altering every aspect of living. I think young people sense this in their conversations with older people. The truth is that our youngsters are almost on a different wave-length than we are. They talk a language that is almost foreign to us because they, in a sense, almost catapulted into a whole new environment and many of us are still hanging on to yesterday that seems to have little reality. This is one of the advantages of trying to stay close to the young, and as a public official I spend as much time with young people as my life will permit. In fact, when I become weary, all I need to do is to find some youngsters out in the hall of the Capitol and I invite them into my office, or take them down to lunch, and upset my whole schedule and my staff goes half mad and I couldn't care less... (LAUGHTER)... because it's a choice between whether they're going to go off the beam or me... (LAUGHTER)... and I figure if I have the choice, they should be the ones to suffer. (LAUGHTER)

So I keep in close contact with these youngsters and I find that they do something for you. They give you good reason to want to live and lead a good life.

But these changes that we speak of... America has been urbanized at an unprecedented rate and so few people are prepared for it. When I hear people talk about how they ought to move folks from

the farm to the city, I know we have rural problems but we surely have urban ones, too. And sometimes it's only the transfer of problems that make it worse.

We're being urbanized and suburbanized... the blessings of suburban life have now become somewhat of a problem. We're being automated and automobiled. I talked with Mr. Reuther the other day... he told me that by 1975 we'd have 90 million automobiles on our streets. (Do you have that figured out, Garson?) Ninety Million! I can't even find a place to park now! I wonder if people are even giving any consideration to that problem, and that's a problem for the elderly as well as the young. People of all ages drive automobiles.

When I talk to people who are in the behavioral sciences and particularly those in psychiatry and psychology, it seems to me they might do well to spend some time on how many people really lose their sense of balance trying to find a place to park. (LAUGHTER) I do! A public confession...

Patterns are changing in employment, rapid changes. One of the great needs we have today is how can we have these fringe benefits that we're so proud of in American industry... follow the worker. Because all too often a man loses his job... if he does, ^{with} the downgrade in the economy that he may never be able to reclaim that job in the same factory... and he loses all of his rights.

Other countries have met this problem; I think we ought to do something about meeting it, too.

So these patterns are changing in employment and schooling and housing and transportation and shopping, in medicine and recreation. The new technologies are having massive effects on our entire society - solving some problems and creating new ones.

And our population is changing, too. Paradoxically, we're getting older as we get younger. Fifty percent of the entire population of this country will be under 25 years of age by 1970. I think Americans had better think about the young when we see a rising tide of teen-age unemployment in a society that leaves very little room for teen-agers except for fun. Maybe we'd better give some thought to that.

And then we see a larger segment of our population becoming older. The 18 million of our citizens who are over 65 today will become 21 million by about 1970. And I want to digress for just a moment... that was what I was writing in my notes when you caught me in the side of your eye there.

I just came back from the Midwest. I like to get into the heartland of America as well as on its great seashores. I go to these rural communities. I wonder how many of us realize that these rural communities today are being essentially populated by retired people. And there is where of all places little or nothing is being done!

So let me give you a new challenge. What about these elderly people who do not want to leave their hometown? Their loved ones are buried there, their children were born there, their relatives are there, their neighbors are there. You can't move them around like

they're just a commodity. As a matter of fact, two-thirds, or three-fourths, or nine-tenths of health is just plain love and being wanted and just being part of the community.

One of the real problems we have down in these big governmental centers is we become a little too abstract. We start talking about people as though somehow they didn't have... if they have a heart, it's only one that beats, it doesn't have any emotions.

Well, my mother is an elderly woman and to remove her from her community would be cruel and inhuman treatment, and I'm not ready to endorse any program that does it.

So that I say the duty of the government and the social services is go find the people and not have the people running around looking for the government and the social services. (APPLAUSE)

Now I know in due time some of these communities may not be with us, but they're here... and as a man in public life and just a plain ordinary citizen, I say that we have to go to the people.

So one of the great needs is to face up to this problem of the smaller, rural community that has a disproportionate part of its population elderly. The young leave, the old stay - and they're there. And modern medicine keeps them alive - physically - whether they're alive otherwise is up to us and up to them.

Now 1 in 10 of our population who are Senior Citizens, and that's about the ratio, now bear far more than 1/10th of the burden of medical, economic, and other problems. They also offer far more than 1/10th of the wisdom and the experience which this Nation can and should

tap to meet the challenges of tomorrow.

I would say that one of the greatest areas of waste in America today is this waste of human resources... "know-how," experience, wisdom, judgment... I hire people who are smart everyday. My Daddy told me something, he said, "Smart people are ten cents a dozen, son. But to find a wise one is a priceless possession." And we need people of wisdom and of judgment, and I find as I grow older in public life, the most important quality of all is just judgment. And that takes some experience and it also takes even a little aging. (LAUGHTER)

Agencies of the United States Government recognize these statistical facts that I have given to you, and I think some of the other things. And this is why these agencies and officials, dedicated officials, are reaching out to you and through you for ideas, counsel, and information.

I don't think there's anybody here who can tell you anything but I think you can tell us a great deal. This is one time when the Government reaches out to you and asks you for your help... and more of that attitude in Government will build a better Government.

We don't have all the answers and we need to try to find these answers from the people. This IS a Government "of the people" - we ought never to forget it - not a Government of experts. This is a Government "by the people" and this is a Government "for the people." And I'm one of those old political scientists that always will continue to believe in that adage (or axiom) of Government: "Experts should be on tap and not on top." (LAUGHTER) You have to have some policy decisions made by others.

Now you will recall that by virtue of its magnificent record the recent 88th Congress was christened, or became known, as the "Congress for Education." We had a remarkable record of the 88th Congress in this area. And I predicted history may record this 89th Congress as the "Congress for the Senior Citizen."

Now this would be due in part to the full legislative program which the Senate and the House may - and I believe will - adopt on behalf of justice and concern for the elderly. This is an area that has too long been ignored and forgotten.

Foremost of such landmark actions will be the enactment of the hospital-and-nursing-home-care bill known as Medicare this year. Now I know this bill is controversial, but anything worthwhile generally is. But controversial or not, it will be enacted. (APPLAUSE) There will be many refinements and we hope we can remove as much controversy as possible, because the duty of a legislator is to broaden the base of support and, as you know, our President is one who seeks consensus, which means an overwhelming base of support for any new public policy.

Now this bill - known in the legislative circles as the King-Anderson Bill - will enable all of us to pre-pay - - in a sound American tradition - - of insurance - - for hospital, nursing home and visiting nurse care for those aged 65 or older.

Medicare, as it is commonly called, is the cornerstone of sound health economics for the elderly. But it is not all. And I sometimes worry that people over-sell it. It will complement, it will supplement, it will fortify old age assistance which is needed... the

Kerr-Mills medical aid which will continue, private insurance which has a great future, and private savings... I repeat, it is offered not to supplant these other matters that I've spoken of, it is not offered to supplant private insurance, private savings, or old-age assistance, or regular Social Security, or Kerr-Mills. It is offered as a supplement, extra.

Now another legislative action that we anticipate by the 89th Congress is the liberalized Old Age and Survivors Insurance benefits. This is for sure. We passed this in both Houses in the 88th Congress... and then a big argument grew up in conference, as you know, over the Medicare proposal, so no legislation was ultimately given to the President for signature. But it will be re-passed, and I think improved.

Then, too, by the close of the 89th Congress, we hope to enact a comprehensive bill covering many other needs for our elderly. It would provide matching grants, for example, to help strengthen community planning and coordination for health, social, employment, recreational, educational, and other services. There would be additional funds to facilitate research grants and contracts; help in construction of new work opportunity and recreation centers, which you pioneered... as well as to stimulate employment opportunities for our elderly.

The Congress is providing added resources for another vital effort - which surely relates to the growing group of Elderly Citizens - the War against Poverty.

Ladies and gentlemen, I have always felt that a Government that is worthy of respect, or a society that is worthy of respect, would

at least do the following:

It would provide an educational opportunity for its young who are in the dawn of life; it surely ought to provide rehabilitation and care for those who are the crippled, blind and the weak who are in the shadows of life; and it ought to provide compassion and care and opportunity for those who are in the twilight of life, the elderly. And if a society that is as rich and as powerful and as modern and as efficient as this one... if that society can't provide opportunity for the young, care and assistance for the elderly, and compassion and charity ~~and~~ if need be for the maimed and the weak and the crippled... than that society has little or no moral standard.

But I think we have moral standards. And that's why I'm convinced we're going to achieve these great goals. We've done so much in rehabilitation. I call to your attention, for example, that the amounts of money that have been expended by private and public sources for rehabilitation of the crippled, of those that have some mental or physical defect... that that money is pennies compared to the dollars that have come back in constructive employment and fruitful employment - even in tax revenues. We've made lives meaningful by cooperation between public and private sources with the individual who needed rehabilitation. And now as we know that the great need in America above all today is for education, a great nation such as ours can't afford to do less, we need to do more... and I know there are many people here from industry and commerce... the wisest investment that any community can make and any business can make is in education. There isn't any hope for any

community or any business without it.

I came away from my own great university, the University of Minnesota, this week-end... and my fellow Americans, I was there when they dedicated a big space center... you don't operate a space center with illiterates, and you don't operate a space center with people that have a poor elementary and secondary education. You don't even operate it with people that have what we call a Bachelor of Arts or Bachelor of Science degree; you need graduate education. Investment in humankind is the wisest investment you can make and the power of this world today is spiritual power plus brain power, and when you put those two together you have something and without them you have nothing.

So I think we can bear down just a little bit on this and it doesn't cost anything. The most expensive thing is ignorance coupled with illiteracy. (APPLAUSE)

Well, now, this War on Poverty. There are many of our elderly who are very poor, tragically so. There was a time, you know, my dear friends, when the mentally ill were shunted away, people were ashamed of them, you denied you had them, and they were pushed away back in the closet where they were hidden away... or pushed off in some institution... we've changed that because of the unbelievably bad conditions that existed in mental hospitals, it became a national scandal, finally America was awakened, not quite enough, but at least its eyes are open, there's much more to do.

Now, what's the next scandal? Not the scandal, my friend, of somebody putting his hand in the cash register, that's been going on

since that story of Adam and Eve and the apple... somebody was always purloining something! But the real scandal today is what we let happen to our elderly who too often are shunted aside, who all too often are not even the victims of a conscious decision of being shunted aside... they're just left... society moves and leaves them... they're put in the third floors and the attics. And I've been in far too many of these buildings to see where people live and spend their few little dollars of Social Security benefits on rent that is far more than they ought to pay in surroundings that are not fit for humankind! And that's why people who have any sense of moral conscience or any sense of public duty have to do something about this, and we are doing something about it, but we need to do more.

Now you can forgive a society that is poor, backward, undeveloped, you can forgive some societies that don't have the means, because there's not much they could do even if they wanted to.. But YOU CAN'T FORGIVE THIS SOCIETY, because this society wastes more money per day on nonsense than it spends sometimes on the care of the elderly for their health care and their housing care... and that's no exaggeration.

My father who was always my guiding light, he never once in my life told me what time to go to bed, but he was the best getter-upper in the whole state! (LAUGHTER) Now, I'm not going to tell you what you ought NOT to do, I'm not going to say to people that we spend too much on tobacco or too much on commercial recreation, or too much on this... I've heard all those speeches. I'm just simply saying that

if you can afford a dollar for a cigar and a dollar and a quarter for a martini, you can afford a little for Grandma and Grandpa, too. Make no mistake about it! (APPLAUSE) Of if you can't afford it, make a choice - and tell people about it. (LAUGHTER)

Well, this anti-poverty program, of course, is part of an even larger war on the ~~home~~ homefront. It was said here a moment ago by Mr. Meyer - this war and this struggle for human dignity - the war against every enemy that crushes the spirit of man.

And what else is this war about? And this is the war that we ought to interest ourselves in fighting. What are our other affirmative goals? I think there are many.

One above all is to serve and develop human resources, conserve and develop them. The Great Society seeks to facilitate great and productive lives, lives profound with meaning, lives which fulfill noble objectives, for ourselves, our loved ones, our community and our nation.

The poet, Robert Browning, once wrote:

"Life has meaning, and to find its meaning is
my meat and drink."

I think that's what we're talking about here. President Johnson has urged additional actions to bring us, as he puts it

"Closer to that time when elderly people generally
can enjoy the independence and sense of purpose
and accomplishment that are their due."

Yes, "a sense of purpose and accomplishment." This is what has been lacking for too long for too many millions of our aging, for reasons beyond their control.

For too long, as you so well know, "over 65" has meant "over the hill," and it used to be "over the hill to the poor house." Even for those better off, retirement has often involved "Retirement Shock." Years which should have been "golden" have often been of a different hue - "gray" with boredom and "black" in "a long night" of despair, destitution and even disease.

I have a Harris Poll here, I think, in my pocket - here. And you know this Poll appeared, I think, in the morning paper... let's see, March 1st, and it's about the financing of care for the aged. It points out in this Poll that almost one-third of all the families in America are seriously affected by the financing of the medical costs of aged people, elderly people.

But leave that statistic alone for a while. What is the one prevailing common denominator for a vast majority of the aged? Loneliness, loneliness. And my dear friends, if I may say so, just as a sort of a country-store psychiatrist, there isn't any health if you're lonely. It will destroy your health, your mental health and your physical health. And one of the things that we're working on, one of the things you've done the most about in this National Council... you're attacking this problem of loneliness, getting the elderly person's life much more exciting and meaningful and rewarding... so that this separation from a partner, or this separation from friends and community does not leave that despairing sense of loneliness.

Yes, I say this audience has changed all of this a great deal and you've helped guide American society to remember the forgotten ones...

and to fulfill a wide variety of their needs.

Now I urge you to continue and expand your efforts.

Let me mention just a few things that I think you can do in waging this war for human good:

On the economic front, help us to devise ways and means which will assure to elderly citizens sufficient income to facilitate independent living -- through Social Security payments, through sound private pension plans, but above all, through opportunity -- if our citizens wish -- for a Second Career.

The key phrase for America ought to be the key word "opportunity." Opportunity -- not just security -- but opportunity! We don't want a welfare state, but what we would like to have, it seems to me, or what we could really support, is a society that is concerned about the welfare of people, the well-being of people, and what is more important than opportunity.

Specifically on the job front now, help us to achieve our goals such as combatting discrimination against the elderly. We have racial discrimination, but we have discrimination against people who are not even elderly, discrimination against that worker who is 40 or 45 or 50... who may lose his job. Help us provide opportunity for full-time, part-time, or even volunteer employment. Show us the way.

On the housing front you've done great things. But help us to enable the elderly to live in more comfortable accommodations -- apartments or homes suitable to their needs and at reasonable financial cost, and with the standards that the great housing industry and non-

profit organizations and Federal agencies can help provide.

And on this education front, we need your help. Enable us to provide expanded opportunities for lifetime learning, including vocational studies.

On the recreation front, help us to enable the elderly to gain new skills and interests and strengthen old ones, you've pioneered in this but do even more. To increase their enjoyment of the arts and the crafts, to encourage them, if they're so inclined, to travel, to see America. I wish we could get our Senior Citizens, our elderly people, into groups and they can travel and see their great America. They don't all have to go, you know, on these international tours.

(LAUGHTER) Just see America! (LAUGHTER AND APPLAUSE)

Yes, to help these people enjoy games, so to speak, and to have a wonderful time.

On the community front -- help us to develop new means to enable the elderly to make their maximum contribution in civic life -- yes, in political work. I've made a sizable effort in that, I might add, myself... in encouraging elderly people to help someone along...

(LAUGHTER)... and I want to give anybody in politics a little advice here.

There are three groups that are really worthwhile in politics... everybody helps... but you give me a person that says he or she is retired and doesn't really want to be retired and you get them excited about your candidacy or your program... Boy, do you have a worker that's really great and they can really go to work!

There's another group that's very helpful, the young. They're filled with enthusiasm and idealism and they'll go to work.

And then there's a general category, gentlemen, the women.

(LAUGHTER) I hate to expose the secret of what limited success I've had...

(LAUGHTER)... but may I say these three factors have played a very important part... (APPLAUSE)

But on this community front - outside of this little inside information I've given you - there are community centers where our elderly people can be put to very good work in the work of service agencies like VISTA, Volunteers In Service To America... Mrs. Johnson, the President's Lady, was in St. Petersburg, Florida this past weekend giving out the certificates of ~~graduation~~ graduation of training of the VISTA volunteers. Do you know that 22 percent of all the volunteers for VISTA are people aged 60 or over? This is a whole new life for many, many people... to work to help other people.

And, indeed, we even have the elderly in the Peace Corps and they do a great job.

Now this Administration proposes to do this and more. On the medical research front, we will reinforce scientific studies to unravel the mysteries of the aging process itself... pediatrics to geriatrics... in fact, we're doing even better, even pre-natal. (LAUGHTER) And we're going to try... and Doctor Terry could tell you about this and maybe has... to unlock the riddles not only of this aging process but of such mass killers and cripplers as heart disease, mental illness, arthritis, and neurological disorders and cancer. And with the approval of the Congress, we're going to set up great Regional Medical Centers. So that every part of America shares in the

knowledge of the healing arts... great Regional Health Centers where modern, up-to-date information is available to every doctor in that area. And we are going to have these centers translate latest research discoveries into the most advanced services of patient care. We will expand the numbers of the the healing arts manpower to staff these new and modernized institutions - hospitals and nursing homes and other facilities.

And in so doing, we're going to stress preventive, not just curative and restorative medicine. This Nation~~x~~ needs what I would call "Well Clinics," just as it needs clinics for sickness.

Creative innovations are needed in every area of service of the elderly. Already, in the physical sciences, massive innovations have transformed the world of matter. Our one great advance has been in what we call "Systems Engineering." If you go over to the Pentagon you'll hear a lot about this. It has achieved near miracles in the solution of complex, urgent, rapidly changing problems of national defense. No one approaches a problem in national defense any longer by simple little one-discipline after another. It's all a multi-discipline effort, all integrated systems. This has been indispensable in space and in the exploration of outer space. In fact, the agencies of this government are now insisting that the great universities have what they call "Space Centers." They don't want to contribute just to biology, or just to physics, or just to one other discipline; they must be integrated, multi-disciplined, or disciplinary efforts.

--

Now we need "Systems Engineering" for the elderly in their changing environment. In the behavioral sciences, the widest variety of skills -- medicine, psychology, sociology, anthropology, and education and many others -- must be blended -- not just to meet part of the needs, but for the totality of the needs of the elderly. And we can even use computers here in this process. These computers can help us develop models which can manipulate heretofore unfathomable numbers of variables in varying combinations.

In other words, let's apply the tools that are available to our problems. Let's not go around in the horse-and-buggy age when you're in the space age. We're having to deal with problems in the second half of the twentieth century.

Now we are doing some things about this. We have Fellowships in the Aging, for example... this is new. And we are proposing Regional Laboratories for the Aging. There are Fellowships in Medicine and each of the other sciences. Through the National Institutes of Health we'll be in a position to offer Fellowships for a combination of skills in all of the sciences, medical and others, which involve the elderly.

This is what we mean by a type of multi-disciplinary approach.

There are great laboratories for the study of the atom and of space and of matter. Similarly, Regional Laboratories to study the problems of men and women of advanced years will be in the national and international interest and we ought to contemplate these and get on with it.

Every neighborhood, every community is in a certain sense a social laboratory. And the Nation should do more to honor the communities that achieve a greater success in serving the elderly.

Every time a defense plant does a good job we put a flag above it - say "Hurray!" - you've produced more missiles or more bullets or more guns, you've done a great job... and they bring them down to the Department of Defense or the Department of Commerce and they have a big ceremony honoring the community or the industry for "Excellence." This IS excellent, I'm delighted to participate in these ceremonies, but may I suggest that we could have an "E" for Excellence for the communities that do the best job in serving the elderly. We could have an "E" for Excellence for companies and unions and universities and voluntary organizations that are serving the aged or the aging.

We must break new intellectual ground, that's what I'm talking about, in the services for the elderly. What we've done yesterday is not enough and you know it. If all we're going to do is to redo what we've been doing, then we're in a losing game. So we have to find out something better to do and by "we" I mean just what I say, all of us, a creative partnership of Government, industry, of labor, of education, of Foundations, of voluntary agencies and yourselves.

So let no one over-rely on nor expect "cure-alls" from one source, namely, the Federal Government. Because the Federal Government isn't going to be able to do it.

But let no one under-estimate the will of the United States Government to play its fullest role, consistent with meeting its

obligations, in serving the elderly. The Federal Government HAS a role but not the whole role, just a part of it.

Time is precious. The time to put our ideas on the "launching pad" is now. And I guess what we're really saying is that we must try, we must innovate, we must experiment, we must demonstrate. We're a Nation of thinkers and planners, to be sure, but I'll tell you, we're more than that. We're also a Nation of doers, a Nation of builders.

"Give us men to match our mountains" is the motto of the great American West.

In ancient times it was said: "There were giants on the earth in those days."

My fellow Americans, we need today and tomorrow - for the service of the elderly - for the service of this country - giants, giants of intellect, giants of understanding, giants of leadership.

I happen to believe that the National Council on Aging is rather well endowed with such talent. And the President of the United States and his Vice President are very grateful for this Organization, grateful for what you are, and grateful for what you represent, and grateful for what you will be, and what you can and will do.

So I extend to you on behalf of our President and I say of this Government:

Our best wishes for a great Convention in the service of a Great Society.

Thank you. (APPLAUSE)

_____ : Mr. Vice President, we are indeed very grateful... INDEED very grateful... to you for having presented to us this extremely fine challenge and program. I feel that the program which is facing us today and the rest of this week will in a very small measure attempt to find some solutions for the problems which you have outlined to us today. I feel that this challenge was not only thrown out to the National Council on the Aging but I am sure you meant it to be a challenge to our national community.

And while I'm here I'd like to make a deal with you, Mr. Vice President. We, The National Council on the Aging, pledge our fullest support to you and the National Government in the program which you have just outlined to us and in return we're going to look to you to help support us. (LAUGHTER AND APPLAUSE)

VICE PRESIDENT HUMPHREY: That sounds pretty fair.

_____ : Thank you very much. We have no particular announcements except to urge you to go back to your workshops and your programs because you have a job ahead of you.

Thank you, again, Mr. Vice President.

VICE PRESIDENT HUMPHREY: Thank you. (APPLAUSE)



Minnesota Historical Society

Copyright in this digital version belongs to the Minnesota Historical Society and its content may not be copied without the copyright holder's express written permission. Users may print, download, link to, or email content, however, for individual use.

To request permission for commercial or educational use, please contact the Minnesota Historical Society.



www.mnhs.org