

REMARKS

VICE PRESIDENT HUBERT HUMPHREY

VETERANS MEMORIAL HOSPITAL DEDICATION

ELLENVILLE, NEW YORK

OCTOBER 18, 1965

Today we dedicate a new hospital, built in cooperation between the citizens of your community and your government.

Cooperation is nothing new here in Ellenville. Not long after your first settler, John DeWitt, built his log cabin, a group of civic leaders decided to pass the hat around and build a schoolhouse. A few months later, with most of the town pitching in, a new school was constructed on Maple Avenue.

Later on -- in the 1870's -- some public-spirited citizens subscribed to pay for kerosene lights on your streets until the village took over the responsibility.

Throughout the good years and the bad, schools were replaced, churches and libraries built, and new public services started -- all in the spirit of cooperation and civic concern that helped build this hospital.

When your able and energetic Congressman, Joe Resnick, invited me to attend these ceremonies this morning, he told me that I'd be meeting the best fund-raisers in America. And when he told me how much money you raised for this hospital -- a non-partisan hospital, I might add -- I came prepared to recruit each and every one of you for our Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee.

Joe Resnick is a man who works for his District.

Because of Joe Resnick, the doors to the Veterans Hospital at Castle Point are still open.

Because of Joe Resnick's leadership, 250 Jamaican workers were allowed into Ulster County to work in the apple harvest. The 28th District is ably represented in the Congress of the United States.

And with such community leaders as Ben Lonstein and Harry Resnick working in your behalf, we can also say that you are ably represented here in Ellenville.

These two gentlemen helped your community raise 727,000 dollars in signed pledges to make this hospital a reality. The federal government, through Hill-Burton aid, provided 540,000 dollars. I am sure that this accomplishment is a source of deep satisfaction to you all.

The meaning of this new hospital in your lives is clear: You are making an investment in the basic resources of your community.

And that is what we are trying to do in all America.

President Johnson, in his message on health to the Congress, said that "the health of our people is, inescapably, the foundation for fulfillment of all our aspirations."

We have begun a five-year program of project grants to develop 32 multi-purpose regional medical centers to fight heart disease, cancer and stroke.

Despite the phenomenal medical progress of this century, these three diseases still kill seven out of ten Americans. In all, 53 million persons now living can expect to be victims of one of these three afflictions. Geography must not be a barrier against receiving adequate treatment of these diseases. And the regional medical centers insure that those who need treatment will receive it.

We are building more Public Health facilities, expanding community health service programs, and starting new child care and treatment services, especially for the 15 million youngsters who live in poverty. And we have recently witnessed the most sweeping expansion of health care benefits for our senior citizens, in thirty years.

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Yes, we have learned that the high cost of lost resources is measured in hopelessness and helplessness... in resentment and rejection...in the loss to our nation of valuable energy and talent.

We seek to make full use of our natural resources -- and the American people themselves are the richest resources we possess.

This Administration is dedicated to the proposition that every American deserves an equal chance to enjoy the blessings of life.

We see the Great Society not as a welfare state, but as a state of opportunity. While the majority of Americans are making the most of their abilities -- enjoying the highest standard of living in man's history -- there are still far too many Americans living without that opportunity.

That is why we are engaged in the only noble war mankind has ever waged -- against the forces of ignorance, hunger and disease.

If you examine the historic legislative record of this 89th Congress, you cannot escape the conclusion that we are succeeding in our efforts to create a Great Society.

-- A society in which Americans can pass on to their children the joys and satisfactions of the good life.

-- A society where each schoolboy knows he can accomplish whatever his talent and hard work will enable him to do.

-- A society where justice and compassion are not slogans, but living realities.

Today, the American people are united as never before. We are united in our determination that all Americans shall have a chance to obtain a good education -- and we are seeing to it that they do.

We are united in the conviction that every citizen shall be able to vote. And Congress has translated this desire into the law of the land.

We all want our cities to be better places in which to live and work . . . and we want to preserve our nation's beauty and natural resources. And we are doing something about it.

We are united, too, in our dedication to a world of peace . . . and freedom . . . and brotherhood.

The vast majority of this Administration's legislative program has become law -- not just because we possess large majorities in Congress, but because the American people want the things contained in that program -- health, education, equal rights and opportunity for all our citizens.

Yes, we Americans are united.

And, we can be nothing less in the world we live in. For every single day in this nuclear age carries with it the possibility of destruction, or of progress.

We have it in our means -- for the first time in man's history -- to destroy mankind itself, or to extend mankind's benefits to all men.

Our choice is clear to us. We must say "yes" to the future. We must resist aggression. We must help those in the world -- the disinherited, the hungry, the humble, the weak -- who need our help. We must pursue peace to the ends of the earth or face the end of the earth.

As we explore outer space -- as we come to learn how small and vulnerable our world really is -- we know that we must do in our time whatever we can to preserve life and to make it full and free and happy and useful.

This, then, is what the Great Society is all about. It is the recognition that a second car and power mowers and dry martinis are not enough.

It is the recognition that we can create in America our state of opportunity. We can right old wrongs. We can offer each person -- each place -- in our country the chance to be better tomorrow than today. And we can, with our wealth and power, lead all men toward days of peace and promise.

As the people of Ellenville built schools and churches many years ago . . . as you build a hospital today, let us build America to stand strong and free for generations beyond us.

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