

NOTES

VICE PRESIDENT HUBERT HUMPHREY

Conference of the Department of Social Action

IUE, March 21, 1967, Sheraton-Park Hotel

I was pleased to see your program to promote whole unionism and your scheduled workshops in equal opportunity for youth, in housing, in employment and in education.

It is particularly good to see your emphasis on equal opportunity for youth.

As some of you may know, this touches on a new responsibility assigned to me by the President recently: And I would like to direct most of my remarks tonight to our responsibilities in assuring full opportunity for youth.

The new responsibility I mentioned is that of Chairman of the new President's Council on Youth Opportunity.

Our Council, which will be composed of the heads of the major departments of the government concerned with the needs of young people, is charged with assuring that opportunity is made available to all the young people of America.

We intend to stress not only equal opportunities for all our young people, as you have been doing in your meetings here, but full opportunities so that our children may develop into young adults who are equipped for productive, decent and happy lives.

The President's Council on Youth Opportunity, just as you are focusing on whole unionism, will focus on the whole life of the child, beginning with his earliest life and the whole of his needs in education, employment, recreation and health services.

We will try to break away from primary concern with just the hours and months in which young people are in school or working.

We will continue to have a special interest in the summer as a time when young people have maximum freedom. This freedom from the daily routines of school means not only trouble and problems for some young people, but also real opportunities for the community to assist in their growth.

The summer of 1967 can be a time of troubles in some of our cities.

The question we must ask ourselves is whether we wish to plan ahead for the summer or wait until trouble occurs and then try to quiet it down.

I think we take our responsibilities as community leaders too seriously to act only as troubleshooters.

Secondly, we must not reward violence.

The public does not support such action and in the long run it can only bring more trouble.

So let us look at what we can do for the summer of 1967. First of all, there will be a large selection of tools available from the federal government to help communities make the most of their summer.

The Departments of Labor and Commerce will very shortly announce a combined effort to encourage private and public employers to open up new employment opportunities for young people. The Department of Labor is also making available in a number of cities additional funds to place the hard-core unemployed young person in a period of basic training and then in a job which he can do and can keep.

Local groups will have available the assistance of the Community Action agencies, funded under the Office of Economic Opportunity.

These agencies provide a variety of health services, day care and nursery aids for working mothers, employment counseling and guidance, the foster grandparents program to help institutionalized children, and recreation centers.

We will have available an expanded Neighborhood Youth Corps, which can provide up to 195 thousand jobs for our young people. Communities will be able to use these jobs both to help the young people who hold them and to provide summer services, such as recreation supervision and park maintenance. These jobs will not only serve other young people, but permit the youth to save funds he needs to return to school in the fall.

We will have the Head Start programs to more effectively reach younger children. The President has recommended large scale expansion of these programs.

There will be opportunities for thousands of youths in Manpower Development and Training programs.

There will be experimental and demonstration programs under the Manpower Acts to employ youths and to develop new types of summer activities which help in occupational preparation.

We will have greatly expanded assistance to local public educational agencies serving areas with concentrations of children from low income families. These Title I funds are available for summer programs and the communities have now had a year to plan for such use of them.

Title III of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act provides for grants to local educational agencies for supplementary educational centers and services. The vocational education acts authorize grants for compensating students employed pursuant to work-study programs.

The Manpower Development Act provides grants to the states for institutional training.

The College Work-Study program, which provides funds for colleges to employ students in need, may be used to provide staff assistance to community summer programs.

The Aid for Dependent Children and Child Welfare Services provide assistance to many of the most deprived children in the nation. With the support of these programs, welfare workers may help deprived children to take full advantage of available community resources.

The neighborhood facilities program is helping communities with the development costs of projects providing a range of community services including recreation, health and welfare.

The Upward Bound program is making it possible for thousands of young people to be prepared and motivated for entering institutions of higher education in the fall.

Let me remark at this point that we would not have these tools to assist these young people in the summer of 1967 and throughout the year, if it had not been for the vigorous work of the International Union of Electrical, Radio and Machine Workers and of your brother unions in the American labor movement.

Yet with all these federal tools available, we can only have a successful summer in 1967 to the degree that local community leaders, business executives and others are willing to get together and plan for a successful summer.

Therefore I want to appeal to you folks now, in carrying out your responsibilities for whole unionism, as you return to your home communities, to act as a principal force in encouraging local community leadership in planning for the coming summer.

You and your fellow union leaders in my opinion are one of the best forces we have for seeing to it that each community makes the most of the tools available to it.

You were a chief force in securing Congressional support for the War on Poverty.

But more than that, you are leading other international unions in your concern about the future of our young people. I know that your International Executive Board is organizing a Youth Committee to determine how best to open the doors of opportunity for young people, particularly in your own union.

And even more, it was the IUE which was the first union to apply for and secure a job training contract at the national level under federal manpower programs. The award of that contract -- which is now providing Americans with hope of a decent life who otherwise would not have such hope -- was announced last year just before the first of these annual

conferences of your Social Action Department.

The first order of business for summer 1967 is opportunity for jobs. There will be more young people than ever before in the job market when school closes this summer. About 12 million 700 thousand 16 to 21 year-olds will be seeking work this summer. Unless we act now, 2 million of these young people will not have a job.

For some young people, not finding a job will mean they will be unable to return to school this fall. For some communities a large number of young people unable to find a job will mean trouble.

And our commitment to full and equal opportunity for youth means we have a special job cut out for us this summer. Last summer we were able to find over a million additional jobs for young boys and girls.

But, while we were able to bring the unemployment rate for last summer for white boys and girls down to 9 per cent, non-white youth still were unemployed at a rate of 23 per cent. This opportunity gap must be closed.

I therefore make a special appeal to you leaders of the IUE to make equal opportunity for youth in summer employment a matter of your first priority in the coming months.

You are already showing the rest of us how to do it in your job training program but you may be able to lead your community in making additional efforts.

You will want to take an independent look at how well you community is mobilizing for the summer.

You may want to meet with your mayor, your local chamber of commerce head, local officials of the federal government, your state employment service officers and others to see that the maximum effort is being planned now and will be carried out.

You may want to offer the resources of your local for recruiting disadvantaged young people for available jobs. You may want to make a special plea to your major employers to open up new jobs for disadvantaged young people.

The second special force which you can provide for a successful summer of 1967 in your community is to be a gadfly on behalf of the full utilization of existing resources and facilities. You can help your community and young people in your community by asking of responsible officials such questions as these:

Is the school system keeping open its facilities for summer educational and recreational use?

Has the school system tried to secure additional federal funds under Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act for summer programs?

Is the school system actively participating with the local recreation department and other community groups in planning for the summer?

Are the playgrounds in your community lighted so that there can be maximum use of them during the warm evenings of the summer?

If there are inadequate playground facilities, are there business and commercial facilities such as a coliseum which goes unused during the summer because of lack of air-conditioning, or parking lots which stand vacant in the evenings, still unused for summer recreation?

Are local leaders fully exploring the use of other existing programs of federal and state governments to support summer programs, for example, the Neighborhood Youth Corps?

The third special emphasis which local union leadership can give to a successful summer in 1967, is searching out ways to provide a new outlook for inner-city young people.

Just looking forward to and having the experience of a new environment at some time during the summer can make all the difference in a child's attitude and hopes. One of the things we want to do is to assure that there are maximum opportunities for inner-city children to spend a period in a summer camp or with a more advantaged family in a vacation environment.

On the basis of initial studies, I am convinced that we can make the maximum advance toward this goal by helping the existing camps and the groups which now run these camping programs to fill their facilities to capacity. These groups -- boy's clubs, girl and boy scouts, Campfire girls, and many others who run private and public camps, are already making a large scale effort to bring disadvantaged young people into their camping programs.

Nevertheless, in many areas there is still a large vacancy rate in existing camps.

Union leaders can perform a signal service in their community by making sure their community leadership is now identifying where there are vacancies in nearby camps and making a determined effort to utilize these vacancies for inner-city children. If you find that such a program is not being carried out, you may wish to take the leadership yourself in raising funds to help these children go to camp, in setting up a system of finding young people who need this experience and getting the cooperation of their parents in letting them have it, and in securing the full and active cooperation of groups who run the camps near your community.

Let it be one of our goals that no inner-city child is denied a camping vacation when there is a vacant bed in a nearby camp.

The title of your own job training program -- your BUDDY program -- summarizes exactly my message to you tonight: Building Up Dignity Depends on You -- indeed it does.

#####

[Transcript]



INTERNATIONAL UNION OF ELECTRICAL, RADIO AND MACHINE WORKERS

AFFILIATED WITH THE AMERICAN FEDERATION OF LABOR and CONGRESS OF INDUSTRIAL ORGANIZATIONS
AND THE CANADIAN LABOUR CONGRESS

PHONE: 296-1200 (Area Code 202)
1126 SIXTEENTH STREET N.W., WASHINGTON, D.C. 20036

PAUL JENNINGS
President

PHILIP MURRAY BUILDING

March 24, 1967

Miss Barbara Ramsey
Office of The Vice President
Washington, D. C. 20501

Dear Miss Ramsey:

In accordance with the request of The Vice President,
we are sending you a transcript as well as the tape of the
speech given at the Second Annual Conference, Department of
Social Action, on March 21, 1967.

If I can be of assistance to you in any other way,
please let me know.

Sincerely,

William S. Gary
William S. Gary, Director
Department of Social Action

opeiu 2 aflcio
WSG/b km
Enclosure

Thank you so much. Permit me to first of all thank you for your warm welcome, your friendly welcome for your fine introduction. I am extremely pleased and much flattered and my old friend and late and beloved friend Adlai Stevenson used to say "flattery is alright if you don't inhale it". As you may have noticed I took a deep breath, as Paul was introducing me here tonight. I know you've had a very busy two days and I know that you've had a very rewarding and busy evening. I gather that Hugh Murphy has been here to hold forth his views and that you've had a host of speakers. My day and ^{these} ~~the~~ last couple of days have been as busy as I ever want them. I just greeted back into town the fellow that runs it and the President arrived back right around 7:00 . I was over at the White House when ~~he~~ his helicopter came in and then we went up to his private living quarters and spent a little over an hour and a half busying about his trip to Guam about some Legislative problems that we have and about the meetings that we will be having in the next couple of days. In betwixt this I have been trying to carry out my regular schedule as Vice President and fit in a few other matters and prepare a program and schedule for a two weeks

journey that I will be making starting this coming Sunday into Western Europe. And to prepare; and when I was just a Senator I used to just get on a plane and take off and now that I'm Vice President, if I take off why it requires an awful lot of planning and getting things together and briefing and a lot of folderol before you ever take off and I've been going through that tonight and I may just as well tell you that I haven't even had a chance to have lunch or dinner so if I growl a little bit this evening it's just as my wife would say "you have to feed him" in order to keep him happy but I can't talk to you and eat at the same time and since AI have a choice I rather talk than eat. And I want all the officers and members of the IUE to know that I got this broken hand defending a righteous cause. I told the President the other day, he said how did that happen ~~Hubert~~ to you Hubert, and I said Well Mr. President somebody said something unkind about you. Esther Peterson, when she met tonight said how did that happen Hubert, I said well I was just breaking up a Company Union. So this has worked out quite well, it gives me a degree of sympathy, causes me a moderate degree of distress, has slowed down everyting that I'm doing and to a point where I don't where I don't know if I'm happy about anything anymore.

But I guess a fellow gets accustomed to it. I think I should let you know that it happened in the most normal fashion. I just walked in to the apartment house where we are living and there were a couple of gentlemen that were waxing the floor and one of them said, just as I walked through the door, "be careful Mr. Vice President, it is slippery" and at that point I followed his suggestion. I made a four point landing and the wrist apparently broke the fall and I've been suffering the consequences ever since.

I want you to know first of all how very pleased I am as a fellow citizen and as a public official, your Vice President, that you're here in Washington holding this Social Action Conference. I know that this is a part of your regular work and I know that this is your Second Annual Conference of the IUE's Department of Social Action and I know that you're having the opportunity to get better acquainted with many of the programs of your Government. But most of all I'm happy that your're here because we need you. We need you very, very much. This is not the 89th Congress that's in town, this is the 90th Congress. This is not to say that the 90th Congress is without a Liberal and Progressive

orientation because I think it is. But I do believe that a number of people after the elections of 1966 have been sold a bill of goods. Namely that it is not politically popular or wise to legislate for the people. That has happened before you know. There are always those that remind members of Congress and other Public Officials. That the reason things go wrong in our election is because well because you well you did too much on minimum wages. Or you pushed too far and too fast on the Poverty Program or some ~~such~~ Social Welfare Program. Or you tried to go too far and too fast in Civil Rights. There are always those ^{that} ~~who~~ say ~~that~~ hold back. There's a crowd I call the pause crowd. Now there are others that you'd call the retreat crowd. But the pause crowd are the ones that said ^{now} ~~that~~ you've done enough, let's just stop for awhile. Let's just pause. The trouble with that philosophy is that nothing else stops. You may stop, but the problems continue, the population grows, the economy changes, the world changes, everything else changes except you. And when you get yourself into that position as an individual or a political party or a government all I can say is that you are out of tune with the times. You've not only paused you've put yourself in^o reverse gear.

And if you haven't done that at least you've gotten yourself off into the side roads and the ditches so that you're no longer on the main road of social progress. Well I'm here to tell you that this is no time to pause. I'm here to tell you this is no time to look back. As old Satchel Paige said "don't do it, someone may be gaining on you". This is a time to look ahead and this is a time to not only look ahead but to take some inspiration and some consolation and some invigoration out of ~~of~~ what you've already done. And then to be even more invigorated and more inspired but what there's left to do. Now I know that many people feel that, as I said there's the group that said we ought to retreat, there's another group that says we ought to pause and there is still yet another group that says you ought to just go for broke. Just go full steam ahead. And some of the proposals that come from that particular group are the proposals that I would like ~~to~~ very much to endorse. That my ideals, my sense of idealism, my personal commitments says this is what I ought to say and I ought to do. But then I have been brought to recognize and realize that you can't always do all that you want to do but what is important is that you do at least some of

the things that you want to do and that you start to understand that steady progress is the sure way to social betterment. Not defeats, not retreats, not pauses but steady social political progress. And not always so steady either, even if you have to get it by fits and starts and spurts it's important to constantly have that social progress and we have it. Now let me just say a word about I know what your session has been about. It's been, you've been talking about the rights and privileges and the responsibility to promote whole Unionism and you've had Conference Workshops as I've been told/^{on}Equal Opportunity for Youth and I want to say something about that Equal Opportunity ~~for~~ in Housing and Employment and Education and other subjects. The theme of the Conference is Opportunity, the theme of the Conference is Equal Opportunity for everyone and to make your Union not just a Union that not only is interested in Collective Bargaining but a total Union that is interested in the Federal Union in the Republic in everything that goes on in this Country and for that I commend you and thank you. Let me just say a word to you about what's happened and what I think is going to happen. The 89th Congress that you've heard so much about, which is now a part of history and

and it can't be relived and redone or repealed. The 89th Congress not only redressed old grievances but that 89th Congress also looked to the future. I'll never forget when President Johnson called me into his office after we were first elected in 1964 and had taken the oath of office in 1965 and he said to me, he said, Mr. Vice President we'd better get all the Legislation we can get to carry out that Democratic platform the first session of the 89th Congress because, he said, I've been around this town a long time and after you've been here a little while you begin to understand that some of the initial enthusiasm and support ~~you thought~~ that you had after a great victory starts to further itself away. Take a look at what happened to Woodrow Wilson, take a look at what happened to Franklin Roosevelt and just take a look at what happened to any of the great victories the Presidents have had. They come in with an overwhelming majority and believe it or not that majority, ^{even} ~~although~~ it's a numerical one, starts to lose some of its vitality and some of its cohesiveness so we're going to ^{have to} push and push hard, we're going to have to advance

programs quickly and we're going to have to ask for those programs to be adopted and we're going to have to get these programs nailed down into Public Law even if we can't get all of them funded into appropriations right away /and that's what we did. The 89th Congress caught up with the things

that we needed to do for yesterday and it added a whole shelf of things that we need to do for tomorrow. And it filled in my mind, as I see with the tools & it, it filled the storehouse or the warehouse of American Democracy/ with programs not only for 1966 and 1967 but for 1976 and for years ahead. It represented the beginnings of many things that were needed in this country just as Franklin Roosevelt's New Deal represented the beginnings. Why some of you here can remember the first minimum wage, the coverage was so insignificant that if you had it today you'd say it was fake. The wage was so small it was almost insignificant. This past year we added over 8 million new people to the coverage of minimum wage. We've brought in groups that have ~~been~~ long been ignored. The real underpaid people in America. The people that were in service industries, in laundries, in hotels. People that were really the poor.

The greatest road to poverty that we made in this last Congress was in the improvement of the minimum wage and Fair Labor Standards Act, no doubt about it. The minimum wage of \$1.40 an hour and 8 million more people covered and I want to say that that is some progress but the first Fair Labor Standards Act that was originally passed, if you'd look back at it now and you were asked to go out and speak about it, you'd say, my goodness that was just a little seedling, it didn't have much vitality -- the same thing is true of Social Security, it didn't amount to much. The first payments were so small, \$10 and \$12 a month, insignificant and coverage was very little but the break-through was made. It's just exactly like when you have the chance to organize your Union. The break-through, the principle was established and in the 89th Congress in many a program in the programs that relate ^{for example} to aid to education in the 88th and 89th, not all that we needed but tremendous advance far more than anybody ever dreamed possible, the Models' City Program, Air Pollution Program, the Clean Streams Program. These just to mention a few. The Old Americans Act, the Medicare program, one after an another. Not only did we much that needed to be done for today but we laid the premise for things that need to be done and will be done

in the years ahead. Now I told a group of Senators not long ago that a good Senator was a man who didn't spend very much time thinking about 1967 cause that's been pretty much thought out already. That a good Senator was one that started to think at least 4 to 6 to 10 years ahead. That's one of the reasons you have a 6 year term. You have 4 years to really do some thinking ahead, you have 2 years to consolidate your position in the hopes that you can another 4 years to think ahead -- the 6 year term. What I'm really saying to you is, you can't arouse people in this country anymore by telling them what you've done yesterday, everybody knows this, every officer of this Union, there are many people in your Union today and I wouldn't doubt that some of them are here that never had to do a lick to get what they have today in wages and working conditions and you know it and I know it but we're just leveling with each other and it doesn't do much good for the officers to come out and say look at the contract we negotiated for you last year, it's like that old fellow says, "well, what have you done for me lately". And when a man in public life

goes on out to the American people now and says look what we did last year, they just start to yawn and start walking away, and this is, I suppose, inevitable in the kind of times in which we live and therefore I think we need to look ahead. I think at least we need to look at what the problems are today and not go around patting ourselves on the back about what we've done yesterday recognizing what we've done was needed and I think good and constructive but we need to take a good look ahead. I believe that this Union ought to concentrate its attention on the year 1976, 200th Anniversary of this Republic. What kind of Union are you going to have in that year? What kind of working conditions? What kind of America are we going to have? When I say, what kind of America, I mean what kind of cities, what kind of people are going to be living in those cities. Not just their ethnic origin but the quality of their lives. What kind of education are our children going to have? What's it going to be like? In terms of transportation and communication. What kind of health care are we going to have? What kind of countryside are we going to have? Is it going to be littered with beer cans and beer

bottles or is it going to have some place where we can have a picnic ground and a campsite. Because make no mistake about it, by the year of 1976 the work week is going to be a lot shorter than it is now. No doubt about that. By the way, I was in this very same hotel when I heard Tom Watson of the International Business Machine gave a speech here about a month ago, when he talked about when the work week would be less than 30 hours and he said it would be before 1980. And I think ^{may} he/very well ~~may~~ be right. Alright what kind of America is that going to give us? What are we going to do with our leisure time? What are we going to do with ourselves? What are we going to have in terms of areas of parks and playgrounds and wilderness area? What kind of lakes are we going to have and streams? Are they all going to be as filthy and dirty as the Potomac? Or are we going to do something about it? Are we going to have an atmosphere that is polluted beyond human tolerance? I think we have the right to ask ourselves these questions. And that's what I want this Union to do. I'm only here for one purpose tonight, I don't need to come up here and encourage you to be for the ^{Liberals} Legislative programs that are before the Congress,

I know where you stand on Civil Rights. I know that. I might ask you not to lose your enthusiasm. I may encourage you to build the coalition that made possible our gains thus far, we haven't by a long stretch solved these problems. We made some beginnings, but we haven't solved the problems of human relations in America or racial relations. But I don't think I have to come here to steam you up on it particularly because you can steam me up on it. I don't think I have to come here and tell you that we must continue to build free trade unionism in this country and industrial unionism in America, I think you know that. I think you know we need to do throughout the world too. I think you know that there can't be a free society anyplace in the world without free trade unions, I think you ought to know that, it's impossible to have a Democratic society without free voluntary groups without a free union movement, without the freedom to associate and to be yourself and to protect your individual and economic and political rights. I don't think I have to come here tonight to tell you that the proposal that President Johnson made in the Social Security Act is long overdue and much needed. I can tell you that the Republic opposition will try

to cut it in half. If they do anything with it. And I can tell you that we we'll try to beat them, and if we can't beat them in Congress we'll beat them at the polls in 1968. And we can do just that if we make our mind and I'm just giving you sort of a smorgesbord speech here you know Minnesota style. I just want you to know, I know you occasionally get discouraged with those of us that are in charge now but if you think that we're bad, just take a look at what they offer on the other side. Your girl may not be Miss America, but I'll bet she's the prettiest one you've seen for a long time. And President Johnson and Vice President Humphrey don't claim that we have any monopoly upon progressivism or liberalism and we don't always please you I'm sure of that but you just run down the check list on the other ticket and just think it out for a little while. And I think that if you do, you'll invite us in for a cup of coffee and a vote. What I'm saying to you is that you know what the concerns are of your people of your families and those of the concern of the nation. We have all kinds of pundits down here that write articles and columns and they tell you what the people are thinking. Well, I think

maybe you know more about what the people are thinking than some of the people that are telling the people what they're thinking. Because most people are thinking about the same thing, they're thinking about how they're going to pay their bills, they're thinking about how they're going to get a little better place to live, they're thinking about their neighborhood, they're thinking about whether or not they can walk home at night and be safe; they're thinking about their prices and their thinking about a good house to live in and a school for their children and a good hospital for their sick ones and so on. Those are what people are thinking, they're thinking of what kind of a world are we going to have if we have any world at all. How do we preserve the peace in this world. That's what they're thinking about. They're thinking about war and peace, they're thinking about every issue that my wife thinks about, that I think about, that you think about, you ^{really} don't have to get a Ph.D degree in what people think to know what people think. Just go out and ask them and they'll tell you. So I want this great organization to take very seriously what it has had as its subject here; its rights, ^{and} ~~its~~ privileges,

responsibility to promote whole unionism. Not just to be interested in collective bargaining, not just to be interested in fringe benefits or the health and welfare benefits under a union contract but to be interested in all of that which is vital and also to be interested in everything that goes on in this country. To be interested in every institution of this country, to be interested in the economic development of this country, to be interested in the political development of America and to be interested in those who have had no opportunity to participate if you please, in the economic and political development of this country and this gets us down to this subject of Opportunity. I think that If I were to be called upon to give one word that characterizes what we're trying to do in this Administration, I would just put one word Opportunity -- that's what we're trying to get more than anything else, and it is not unusual or not to be unexpected that this President would be interested in education. He was a country schoolteacher, I'm an old schoolteacher, there are a lot of ex-schoolteachers in this Administration. Some of us were not born with silver spoons or gold spoons in our mouths, some of us didn't even have tin spoons. We know what it means to struggle for an education. And I think we

also know what it means to see people who never had a chance to get even a little education. Now there is no hope or prospect of hope for anyone in the days ahead in this kind of a scientific-technological society in which we live unless he at least has some formal education including some work experience. He just simply has to have it and I'm not talking now to union members I'm talking to parents. I'm talking to brothers and sisters or I'm talking to would-be parents. And when you get right down to it what we're really concerned about is how do we open up the human capacity, how do we release it? How do we permit people or how do we help people to really help themselves to make the most out of themselves. And the purpose of government as Thomas Jefferson once said and it's only legitimate objective is the health and wellbeing and the happiness of the people, that's the only legitimate objective said Thomas Jefferson, a representative of the government. I think he was right when he said it, I think he's even more right now. So we're engaged today in what I call a great adventure in opportunity. We call some of it the war on poverty. Now what do we mean by that. Not merely the poverty of the purse, because there

is a lot of ways to relieve the poverty of the purse. One of the ways to relieve the poverty of the purse is just to write out a check to everybody, that'll get rid of that kind of poverty. But that doesn't answer the real problem of poverty . Because the poverty that we're talking about today is not just the poverty of economics but it is the poverty of the spirit, it is the poverty that is characterized by bitterness and hatred and frustration in not being wanted; in being rejected. And that kind of poverty is not just going to be corrected because somebody comes along and says here/^{son}have \$100 or \$50 and come back and see me next week, that's not going to correct at all. It's the poverty of motivation, the poverty of self-respect. And it doesn't do any good to go around and try to assess blame because everybody can find somebody to blame. We don't need scapegoats what we need are some answers. And we're searching diligently, we're experimenting trying to find some way to reach people that up to now have been unreachable, trying to find some way to make people employable that up to now have been unemployable. Trying to find some way to arouse a spirit of self-desire and self-respect and

self-motivation in people who have lost it through maybe, no fault of their own. And this is an immense task. And I know we're going to make a lot of mistakes and you'll read about them, that is something you can be sure of. You'll read about every mistake that anybody can find and you'll hear about them. But as I said to group of young students this noon, some 300 of our brightest of our young students from Lutheran colleges across this country, I know there are many people today particularly most of our young, that say what a pity it is that we're having to spend so much in Southeast Asia, we ought to spend more in housing, we ought to spend more for the war on poverty. I couldn't agree more, I wish we could. But then I said what about after the war in Korea, when that one was over. Did we spend more on housing - no. Did we spend more on education - no. Did we spend anything on the poor - no. Did we have one single person in training - no. And yet the poor were here, the slums were here, the ghettos were here, racial intolerance was much worse than it is today, bigotry was here, prejudice was here, ill health was here, illiteracy was here and so were you - so was I. But the Government of the United States and

very few State Governments did very much about it. And the reason was that we just didn't have the kind of concern that is required to move a people and a nation to do great things. When we were able to cut that budget after Korea, which we did, when we were able to cut back by billion of dollars, which we did, we cut taxes. We cut back on federal expenditures. We just cut back period. And we tried to forget that there were the poor. We tried to forget that there were the illiterate. You couldn't pass a Federal Aid to Education Bill.

You didn't pass ^{Higher} ~~Higher~~ Aid to Education; you didn't pass Medicare.

So I don't think it is always related to whether or not you have a war going on what happens. I think what it is related to is what do we think of as a people. How much enthusiasm, how much dedication do we have. As I said to ^a group of young men that were picketing me not long ago, I said, I'm going to have a picket one of these days, I'm going to see where you are, because that picket I'm going to have is going to say the war is over, now follow me. And I said, I bet half of you will be off in the weeds. Follow me in expanding our efforts in this war on poverty, follow me in remodeling and rebuilding our cities. Follow me in an effort to give better care

to our children, pre-natal care. A thousand and one things you can think of. And I venture to say there will be voices who say ~~these~~ now there he goes again, too radical, too fast, too far - what we need is a pause. I'm for the pause that refreshes, in the bottle - called Coca Cola, but that is the pause. I didn't mean to put any commercial in here - I drink Pepsi Cola too and Seven-Up, I want you to know. But what we need to have in this country is an abiding concern over, as I said to a group of religionists today, the least of these. Franklin Roosevelt said "it is not our purpose to do more for those who already have too much, but it is our purpose to help do something for those who have too little so they can have enough." And that shall continue to be our purpose. And interestingly enough in doing that it doesn't hurt anybody, it helps everybody. I had some young fellow today ask me a question about the Job Corps. Isn't it very expensive? And aren't there a lot of troubles, and ~~hasn't~~ hasn't it proven to have a lot of drop-outs? And I said, first of all everybody that entered was a drop-out, that was where we started.

Only 5% of those that ever entered had any work experience. Their average wage was 70¢ an hour. And by the way, fewer drop out of the Job Corps than drop out of the universities. And it costs much less to put a boy and a girl through a Job Corps training than it does through a year of college. If you add in all the costs of a year of college, not what you pay for tuition, that means nothing, that's just a little side payment. The rest of it's been paid for by the public, it's been paid for through generations. And then I went on to point out that we've graduated 16,000 boys and girls from the Job Corps thus far, not many, but quite a few. 90% of them never in their lives had a dental examination, 85% never had a physical examination, a large number of them were totally illiterate, could neither read nor write; add our mark -- in this the richest, most powerful and the most educated country supposedly on the face of the earth. But those 16,000 that graduated 13,000 got jobs at an average pay of about \$1.71 an hour and the rest of them went into military service. And today there are 31,000 more of them in the Job Corps camps. And I know they're going to have trouble and I know

they're going to get in trouble and I know there are going to be some failures and I know there are going to be some drop-outs, but if only 50% of them stay that's 50% better than it was before. And that's what you've got to keep in mind. There are a million young men and women tonight in job training and six years ago there wasn't one. There are 35,000 young men and women today that have picked out of the slums ^{of} ~~and~~ the ghettos of our cities that were given intelligence tests and were found to be brilliant - brilliant, but poor, unhappy, frustrated, miserable. They have been lifted right out of those high schools and put into a university and they're doing beautifully, and Who knows, but one of those 35,000 or more may find an answer to a host of different problems -- cancer for example, one out of every 5 in this room will die of cancer; one out of every 3 will have it. That's the average. I've seen it twice in my own family. And if I can find one boy or girl that lived in a ghetto or anyplace else that could go on and get a higher education and find an answer to that who can evaluate the meaning of that in terms of dollars. Because the heartache and the pain and the cost of disease is beyond human calculation. We have

6 million young people today in our higher education institutions and one million of them are there because we have federal loans and grants and scholarships, one million more than ever before. These are just a few of the things that have happened. We have 5 million elderly people that have had benefits under Medicare since July, last summer - 5 million. The hospitals have received over a billion and a half dollars in cash payments, they never got so much cash in their lives! that Hospitals ~~was~~ never know what it was to be solvent before are now solvent and doctors have received over 200 million dollars in cash payments. And the patient can choose his own hospital and his own doctor. This is a blessing, oh I know there are a lot of weaknesses yet in Medicare. We've got to do something about some of them but I'll tell you something, I introduced the first bill ⁱⁿ ~~of~~ Medicare on May 17, 1949. And it may not be the best looking baby in the nursery but I'll tell you something I'm darn glad to see it. I didn't think it was ever going to get born. And now we look ahead. We know that more of our people are going to move to the cities, don't we. We just know that

you don't have to go and get a Harvard degree to get that or even one from the University of Minnesota. We know that this society of ours is being urbanized. Alright we've got a Model Cities Bill up here in Congress. We fought like tigers to get it through this last session. It isn't all I'd like it to be but it's the first we've ever had and it has an appropriation for it this year of over 400 million dollars. The question is are we going to get 400 million, 100 million or 200 million or none. And right now, I want to tell you, the odds don't look good. Now we've got to have that. We have to make the beginnings, the starts. This is over and above everything else that we've been doing for cities, over and above everything. Because we have to start planning our cities to be places in which to live, not just places in which to work, not just places in which to survive. There isn't any reason at all that American cities shouldn't be the most beautiful, the most magnificent, the most properly constructed human institution that man can make. This is where he's going to live, why shouldn't his environment be good. Listen, if we can make a space capsule so that it has good environment for an astronaut, why can't you have your local neighborhood have good environment for the folks

that are going to live there. Just seems like that to me. And by the way we know how to do it, it's just a question now of getting at it. We know how to do it, we know what to do to prevent pollution of the streams, we know what to do about some of the sulphurous and toxic gases that come out of the smokestacks, we know what to do with the number of fumes and gases that come from the exhausts of automobiles, we know what to do - it's just a question ~~of~~ now of getting at it. So we need to look ahead and say to ourselves look if ~~they're~~ we're going to have a country of 225 million people here by 1975, and that's what you're going to have, that's 25 million more than you have right now. And the way it's going it may be 230 million cause production is up every place. We've got to figure out we're these people are going to live and how they're going to live. And I don't think it's just being cute when you say that if you can figure out how to get a man from the earth to the moon you ought to be able to figure out how to get a fellow from Washington to Pittsburgh in equal time. It's not bad to get him out of Washington to the environs of Pittsburgh but to get him in or into New York City. Magnificent New York City, this great city. The

wonder of America in many ways. And yet, I want to say right now, that if ever this Nation were under attack I'd hate to think what would happen in a traffic jam in New York City. I used to joke about it, I used to say what we ought to do is just invite the enemy in and let them get lost in the traffic. So we need to look to 1970, 1972, 1976. We need to look and see the kind of America we're going to have. We're going to need more than double the amount of classrooms than we have right now. We're going to need hundreds of thousands of more teachers, we're going to need more nurses and hospitals and doctors. And we need to look ahead. And when I hear people say we're going too fast, all I can say is they have never even seen how slow they've been moving all this time. We're not going fast enough, we need to move even faster. Now I want to conclude on this note and then if you have some questions we can take a few. I've been charged by the President to be the Chairman of the President's Council on Youth Opportunity and I noticed one of your topics was Equal Opportunity For Youth. Now that's the least this country can do. We have a

large number of teenage boys and girls 16 and over in this country eligible for employment that are unemployed. We have an unusually large number of them from the minority groups - Negro youth in particular and as I've said to you and I say it in all candor - many of them at this stage, are without the tools and the skills and the training of employment. Now what are we going to do about it?

Well, one thing^{that}/we need to do about it is to see to it that as many of them as humanly possible get the skills and the tools so that they are employable. And that sometimes means adjusting your training programs to the jobs that are here, not for the jobs that you hope will be here. Phasing in your training to the real job opportunities. But more important, it means a whole new adjustment in their lives. I've been out to see some of these^{young}/people and I want to tell you the most thrilling experience I've had in public life is to see how people can literally be born again - start a whole new life. I've been out into some of the great urban centers of America where I've seen ~~xxxx~~ the young men from the gangs and I mean gangs, like you've read about that didn't work, apparently they didn't want to work, were hostile had a world of their own and were really not a part of what we call

our society. And yet I've seen those same young men touched and those same young women motivated and where they themselves go back and motivate others like themselves to live a whole new life. I've given some examples. I remember ^{in which} one city ~~where~~ there were 100 workers asked for in a particular plant and 100 were recruited and sent to the plant and 85 after the first week left, they didn't come around to get their check. They just up and left. They had no experience in industrial life, they didn't know what a Shop Foreman was. When the coffee-break came, they thought it was the time to escape and that is a fact. I've seen the same situation in these terms. Where an employer asked for 100 workers and 100 young men or women were recruited in what we call a basic training or orientation course; where they were taught first of all just how to take care of themselves. Modest amount of personal grooming and hygiene. Where they were taught how to punch a timeclock; where they were taught how to get on a bus and to get to a place to work; where they were taught what a Shop Foreman was and what a Union Shop was and what a Supervisor was and it meant to be in an industrial establishment. And 100 went to work and 95 stayed - it can be done. It's being done all over ~~the~~ America.

All we need to do is to do more of it. These people suddenly become part of the American community and not apart from it. A man can back and gave me an example the other day of what happened down here in Louisiana. Where there was a training program under way. It was under the guidance of a local Priest in his school. And there was a young lady there that was 28 years of age, mother of three, illegitimate children, as they called it. She never had a job in her life. The only check she'd ever received was a welfare check. She was brought into this training program, she took to it, she was basically intelligent, she had qualities, good solid qualities and good work habits, she took her training and got a job with a medical publishing firm. She still has that job right now as a matter of fact, and when she got her first check she came back to the school where she had her training and she wept. She said this is the first time I've ever seen my name printed on a check that I've earned. And she said I just wish I could keep it, she said I'll never forget this experience, but I need it so badly, she said, I just can't keep it - I've got to cash it. And her instructor, in fact it was the local Priest, said look I'll get

I'll get you that cancelled check back. I know how much it means to you. And she came back the next pay period, two weeks later, and she had her check again and she was just delighted, and she said to the Priest what's this on the side - these figures here. There's Social Security, and Withholding and so on. He explained to her, he said, those are taxes that you pay. She said I have never, never paid taxes in my life and I'm 28 years old, I just never knew what you meant by taxes, I'm so proud she said to be able to earn my way and now I'm proud I'm a citizen, I'm paying taxes. And just to show you how fully rehabilitated this woman became - four months later she came back to the Priest and she said "Father, she said, look at this Government of ours, look at the taxes that they're charging me on this." That's what we call rehabilitation and that's going on over this country. We want to see this summer, I want to say we have a special emphasis this summer on what we call our Summer Youth Program but the President's Youth Council is designed for more than the summer. The President's Youth Council chaired by the Vice President is designed to coordinate all the programs of the Federal Government, evaluate those programs,

make new proposals, put a little zip and go into some of the programs where they lag, but for the summer we have certain things in mind. We have an expanded recreation program, we have an expanded youth employment program, we have training programs and we are hoping to set up about 50 of our major cities health centers for the youth in particular. Now I want your help, I'm going to write to every Governor and every Mayor. And those letters start going out tomorrow. We've written to all the employers in this country, big and little already. We're asking them to open up their gates so to speak and give some young deserving girl or boy that is a needy boy and girl a job. And I've met with the large Defense contractors and I said to them, look, you're going to have to change some of your employment standards ^{even} ~~have~~. You have a standard here where if a youngster had a misdemeanor or some small crime or some small misdemeanor on his record you wouldn't hire him. Most of the people we're talking about now have had some fracas with the police. You've got to change it. And we're getting results, I can tell you that the results are very, very encouraging. But I want you to do a favor for me, I want you, when you get back to your town - the first

thing I want your local union to do is to go down and see the Mayor. I don't care what his politics is, just go down and say, listen I just heard the Vice President down in Washington the other night and he wanted me to find out from you have you established in this city, my town, a Mayor's Council on Youth Opportunity. And if you have is the labor movement on it? Is the Chamber of Commerce on it? Is the NAACP on it? Are the community agencies on it? And go on down the line. Just ask those questions. Because the simple truth is most of the cities haven't done it. AND isn't it a pity that before we take action sometimes we have violence. I've said that I had the Mayors of the great cities right here in this hotel less than a couple of weeks ago, and I said to them, are you going to reward violence or are you going to start to take preventive action. Do we have to have trouble on the streets before you find out people need jobs and decent housing and recreation or are you going to do it before it happens. Why do not those in public and private life today work with the other folks who are trying to do something for people. Why do we have to wait ~~for~~ until somebody burns a building down or riots in the streets

causes loss of life and property and injury to person before we find a thousand jobs or before we find two hundred jobs. And I want you to go see your Mayor and I want you to go see your Governor and I want you to say to them, quite frankly, look we don't want to have to have trouble in our town before we ~~might~~ ~~be~~ do what ought to be done anyway. It's just like this world we ought to be doing things that ^{need} ~~might~~ to be done whether there were any Communists or not, we ought not to ~~be~~ always have to be stimulated by the fear that if we don't do it the Communists will take over and we ought to be doing things in our respective homes and localities not ~~under~~ on the basis that if we don't do it there will be a riot but we ought to do it because it's right to do and it can be done. Get your schools open, you own them. Get those playgrounds unlocked, their yours. Go see the schoolboard, we've got neighborhood youth corps boys and girls that will work with your park attendants, with your recreation attendants. Sure it costs a little bit more money, I know that, but it'll cost you a lot more not to do it. Go see how your Police Department is being trained. Find out whether or not it's just a law enforcement agency or whether

it's an agency that seeks to promote law observance. See whether or not that Police Department is working with the kids or on them. Go on out and ask these questions and you'll be doing yourself a real favor, you may even be doing your family a service. I'm sure you'll be doing your Country a service. Now we've got a lot of programs, I'm not going to bore you with them tonight, we've got training programs, my goodness I've got sheets of them here. Manpower Development and Training Programs. We've got the Elementary and Secondary Education Act that provides grants to local education agencies for new and supplementary educational centers^{and}/services, the Vocational Education Act authorizes grants for compensating students employed pursuant to work study programs. Listen we've got more programs for young people than any government ever had,~~but~~ what we need is to get the people out of home to use those programs. One City that I will not mention here, last summer had 2 million dollars of Federal funds that was allocated to it that it never even knew it had - it didn't even use it. They just lost it in their bookkeeping. And when I hear people say they need more money, yes who doesn't. That's nothing, what's new. You know of course we need more money. But the

important thing is to use the money we already have and use it well. And there are other things that can be done too. You can go to the company that you may be associated with as an employee or where your Union has a Bargaining Contract. Undoubtedly you have a parking lot. Undoubtedly that parking lot is in an area of the city in which there aren't enough playgrounds. You might suggest to the management that they make the parking lot available for a playground when there are no automobiles on it or make a section of it available to a playground. And illuminate it and you might suggest to the city that they bring out the sweepers and clean it off and that they put up some volley ball courts or portable basketball courts, they can do it. It can be done. My dear friends ~~when~~ if we want to do it, we can do it. The Youth Opportunity and I don't mean just equal youth opportunity I mean full youth opportunity, I mean maximizing every single program, every single agency, every single resource that we have. This country has plenty to do with, if we have the will to do it. Well, I've taken more of your time than you had anticipated, more than I'd anticipated. But I want to commend you and congratulate you on what you are doing.

But I want to remind you of this just as I leave you. It isn't good enough to just pass another resolution, I have a whole filing case of them. What you need to do is go - if there is a problem in your town relating to young people in your schools get busy on it. If there is a problem in your town relating to teenage unemployment just remember it need not be it can be corrected and you can remind everybody in your town that where there has been trouble it has been corrected. That you would like to prevent the trouble. That you would like to foresee the possibilities of the trouble and that you would like to have your town gain national recognition for having provided an opportunity for young people before the young people got out of hand and I think it can be done. And I want the Unions of America to get involved in this. You're supposed to be the people with social conscience and you are involved. I told a group of young teenagers ~~xx~~ Democrats the other day. I said the best politics is helping people. You know there was a reason for Tammany Hall and there was a reason for the old Kelly-Nash machine. And the reason was that when the immigrant came over there needed to be somebody

~~in~~ ~~in~~ in the block long before the Social Worker that delivered the basket of groceries that took some clothes, that saw that the sick got to the doctor, that saw that Johnny what-ever-his-name-is has got a job and that if Timothy O'Rourke got into trouble that he got out of trouble and etc, etc. That's what the original Ward Leader used to do, that's what built winning political combinations. That's what did it. Then came along our Social Workers and all which we desperately need and many of those services were removed but there's a new day now, there's a whole group of people that aren't being touched. And we need to touch these people and touch their lives. And how do we do it. We go and get our people and our Unions and our political parties and these other groups and go on out and try to be of help to families and communities and neighborhoods involving ourselves becomming socially concerned citizens. Thank you very much.



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