

Plans for Progress - Bankers' Meeting - May 23, 1967

I am honored to be introduced by one of the most selfless, cooperative, and effective leaders of American business whom I've ever known - my friend Charlie Spahr. Charlie, I want you to know how much we appreciate all that you've done over these many months for Plans for Progress - for our people and for our country.

You have already heard from Mr. Caples, Mr. Mayer, Mr. Tayler, and Mr. Barr about the importance of this nationwide endeavor that was initiated some years ago by the business community in cooperation with government. It is a program ^{for} hiring and ^{promotion} ~~promoting~~ on the basis of merit in the American free enterprise system. I can say to you, gentlemen, as one who has devoted many years of endeavor to all aspects of equal opportunity, that the success of Plans for Progress is one of the most reassuring developments we've seen in this decade. Great things have been done. Some of our largest business firms have taken the ~~lead~~ lead ahead of government in making sure that the human resources available to them ^{are} ~~were~~ fully used and fully developed.

We've gone to many of our largest industrial corporations and asked them to pledge ~~the~~ fulfillment of certain standards in employment practices. We have carried this program not only into manufacturing but into service enterprises, into ^{the} ~~communications~~ field - all across the broad spectrum of American business. We now come to you as leading members of the banking and financial community to ask you to become active partners in this important undertaking.

I've just come back from a busy weekend ~~in~~ ^{trip} ~~Dallas, and Huntsville, the South~~. I've talked with the
^{and in}
 top business leaders in Dallas, [^] Huntsville, [^] and Birmingham, Alabama -
 just as I'm talking to you here today - about how we can
 better mobilize, energize, and vitalize the human resources of this
 country. This nation needs them, because it bears tremendous
 responsibilities. If you are in a position of leadership, you cannot
 avoid the responsibilities of leadership. And, whether we like it
 or not, we are [/] world leaders.

You in the banking and financial community are also leaders.
 As leaders, you are expected and required to do better - to bear a
 bigger load.

I'm here to ask your participation in Plans for Progress. I'm
 not here merely to ask you to sign up - that's the easiest thing in
 the world to do. I'm here to ask you to go to work. ~~You are America's~~
^{real}
~~Business~~ Businessmen and bankers are the leaders in our economic life -
[^]
 therefore you have a much bigger responsibility than school teachers,
 social workers, or politicians. The badge of success in this country
 is you, and what you represent.

Ours is ^{possibly} the most compassionate free enterprise system in the
[^]
 world. I want you now, as men who are qualified and experienced in
 the field of investment, to make an investment in human beings. The
 other day I was speaking ~~to the~~ at the 175th anniversary of the
 New York Stock Exchange, ~~and~~ I said that you can't have jobs without
 investment. I also said that you can't have investment without jobs,
 because without enough customers investments ^{won't} ~~can't~~ pay off.
[^]

n We need your help in seeing to it that the people of our
 minority groups - people ^{who} are disadvantaged and deprived, who have
 been the victims of long-standing prejudice - get their ^{fair} chance in
 life. And I want you to be as ingenious in finding out how to give
 these people an opportunity, as some of us have been ^{in the past} in denying it to them.

~~I've seen our Civil Service Commission in Washington ~~say~~ said to me:~~
 "We don't know how we can hire some of these people," I've said:
 "Why don't you get as smart figuring out how to hire them as you
 have been for 100 years in denying them employment - then you'll
 find out how to re-write the standards and get them hired." After
 all, these rules and regulations were written by men - they're not
 divine edicts. We can take a good look at our hiring and promotion
 practices, and then ~~do the job that needs to be done, because it's right.~~

I'm in charge of the President's Council on Youth Opportunity. There
 is an urgent need for the employment of two million disadvantaged young
 people in America this summer. The rate of unemployment among Negro ^{boys} is
~~about three times the rate it is among white youth.~~ ^{two and a half} The rate
 of unemployment among Negro girls is ^{for white girls.} ~~three times what it is among Negro boys.~~

I knew that everyone ~~here~~ in this room is a member of the
 Establishment, including me. We have more to lose than anyone else in
 this country if things go sour. We have everything to lose and everything
 to save. I knew that many of you are deeply concerned about the
 conditions that prevail in our cities today - about the "long hot summer" ^{you}
^{city} read about, and the possibility of riots and violence. Many of you
 are from the great cities of America. Your governments are taking steps -

much-needed steps - to mobilize the human resources of your communities to provide opportunity for young Americans. We need a minimum of one and a half million ^{additional} jobs this summer for young Americans - and preferably two million.

America is getting younger all the time. There are more young people today than ever before. While ~~Americans are mostly employed,~~ ^{nearly all} more Americans are employed than ever before, there is still ~~there is~~ a high rate of unemployment among young people in the age bracket 16 - 20, particularly in the minority groups - Negro-Americans, Puerto-Rican Americans, Mexican-Americans, poor whites, and American Indians.

I've been preaching to American business to take this problem in hand and do something about it - and I'm going to do a little preaching to you too. Are you going to continue to reward violence, gentlemen, or are you going to act before violence breaks out?

In my own city of Minneapolis a year ago, there was violence on our streets. Six blocks of the city were wrecked. ~~They wanted 200 jobs~~ ^{made} those who were engaged in this violence. They couldn't get them. A week after the riot, 2000 jobs were available. Just ask yourself a few questions. Is that the way we are going to do things? Are we to reward the militants and the demagogues? Are we to wait until they stir up trouble before we act - or are we going to act before the trouble? We should see trouble coming down the road, and make the necessary adjustments before it's too late.

^{You} I'm speaking to people here ~~who~~ ^{your} have it in their hands to do something about it. I was at Huntsville, Alabama, last night and I met with a fine group of people, white and colored. I heard them plead for jobs. I was in Dallas and heard the same plea. There's no use going to

the Welfare Department for jobs. They don't have jobs there - they have handouts. We ~~want~~ don't want a welfare state in this country - we want an opportunity state - with training for jobs and opportunity for jobs. It's a whole lot better if a man gets a paid job, even if he doesn't do too well at it, than it is to expand your police department and look to them to pick up the pieces after you've run into trouble.

It's no use speaking to a social worker about hiring, when the hiring is done by industry. The people who count in this country have got to stand up and be counted. You're either going to do it now, or you're going to have to do it later. We're either going to do what needs to be done willingly, or we'll have to do it under duress - and you know it.

Look at what happened on the West Coast. After the eruptions in Watts, Oakland, San Francisco, after the riots, the violence, and the bloodshed, we finally get busy. The government poured in millions of dollars and the state poured in millions of dollars and industry poured in millions of dollars. Now they have ^{more} jobs. I don't want people to think that's the way you get jobs. I don't think we ought to need trouble to make us do what we ought to do before the trouble starts.

Therefore, we need your help. If you're from New York, get in there and help the mayor with his program. If you're from Chicago or Pittsburgh or Cleveland - wherever you're from - get in there and help. There are cities in America today that are targeted for trouble. Just as we know from our Central Intelligence Agency that there are potential hot spots in the world, so we know that there are hot spots in America.

We've had agitsters and demagegues come through this city and other cities, and say that we're marked. They've been able to produce what they said they would before, so I believe in taking them seriously. When a man comes here and says that he's going to take over, and I knew that he's taken over in some other place, I say: "It's time to get to work - in fact, it's later than you think."

I ask you to invest in human resources - it's the best investment you'll ever make. Nobody has a greater stake in ~~the~~ people than you. You are professional investors - you know what it means to invest and you know the importance of a sound investment.

You help protect the value of the dollar, and you do a good job at at. Let's protect the value of human dignity as well, because the dollar isn't worth anything ^{unless there are people behind it. By protecting} ~~unless people are around. It's human~~ human dignity ^{we} that protect [^] the value of the dollar, so there's no contradiction between ~~them~~ [^] those two objectives.

You can be a generous and compassionate man at the same time that you're a ~~hard-~~ ^{hard-}headed businessman. You can have a warm heart as well as a hard head - they work together. In fact, you can't be compassionate unless you've got something to be compassionate with. We don't need people's good words as much as we need their good works.

I thank you for all that you have done. I know you've done many good things. I know that you've been the mainspring in many of our communities of all the things I've talked about here today.

Give us your help in Plans for Progress, in ~~our~~ merit employment, in our summer program. Find out what your community is doing to spare itself future trouble. Find out what you can do to help some young man or woman

have a meaningful free enterprise job - in a bank, a department store, a factory, or some other place where they can earn their way and have the experience of good hard work. It's mighty good therapy for this country. I think that many of our problems today would be overcome if more people understand that it is the best therapy of all.

Transcript

Speech of Vice President Hubert H. Humphrey before the Plans for Progress Bankers' Meeting -- May 23, 1967

I am very honored to be presented once again by one of the most selfless, ~~and~~ cooperative, and effective leaders of American business that I've ever known, my friend Charlie Spahr, ^{CHARLIE,} ~~and~~ I just want you to know how much we really appreciate all that you've done these many ~~many~~ months for ~~the program entitled~~ Plans for Progress, and, more specifically, what you've done for people and what you've been able to do for our country.

I regret that this has been one of those busy days that compelled me to be at the Capitol just a little longer than I had intended, but we have some things that are rather difficult right now facing our country and they've taken a little time today. But you've had some very good speakers that have given you the message, and I suppose what I ought to do is to have the good sense just to pronounce the benediction. You've had the invocation, the sermon, and I don't know whether or not anyone has taken up a collection. You might even want to do that. ¹¹¹ But you ^{have} ~~ve~~ heard from Mr. Caples, Mr. Mayer, Hobart Taylor, and Joe Barr about the importance of your association with this nationwide endeavor that was initiated some years ago by the business community in cooperation with government.-- a program of hiring, of promoting on the basis of merit in the American free enterprise system. And I can say to you, gentlemen, as one who has put many years of endeavor

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in the ~~whole field of~~ equal opportunity, in all areas of American ~~life~~ and that the success of Plans for Progress is one of the most reassuring developments that we've had in the last decade. Great things have been done. Some of our largest business ~~institutions~~ ^{FIRMS} have literally taken the lead before government to assure that the human resources ~~that were~~ available to them were well used and well developed, and that's what this is all about.

We've gone to many of our large industrial corporations and ~~HERE~~ ^{ASKED} they ^{to} sign up ~~under a contractual relationship~~, a pledge to fulfill certain standards in employment practices. We have carried this program not only into manufacturing, but into service organizations, into communications, all across the broad spectrum of American enterprise. We are now coming to the leading members of the banking ~~institutions~~ ^{INDUSTRY}, of the people in the finance community, to ask you to become active participants ^{AND PARTNERS} in this important aspect of American contemporary life.

I've just come back from a weekend of hard work in Miami, Dallas and Huntsville. I have been to at least 15 meetings. ~~about 18 hours a day~~. I've been talking with mayors and county commissioners and other local government officers. I've been meeting at the National Conference on Social Welfare. I have participated in large civic gatherings. I've been at the George Marshall Space Center in Huntsville. I've been at Redstone Arsenal meetings with the military on our space program. I've talked with the top business leaders in

Dallas, Huntsville, and Birmingham, and I've been talking about what I'm talking to you about today. About how we can better mobilize, energize, vitalize the human resources of this country. This nation has a tremendous responsibility, and we cannot avoid it. I know there are some people who want to stop the world so they can get off; and there are those who feel that America is over-extended, and there are those who feel that we are taking on too much, but the simple truth is once ~~that~~ you get yourself into a position of leadership, ~~however that may have happened, that~~ you cannot avoid the responsibilities of leadership. Leadership is not a luxury, it doesn't ease your role in life -- it complicates it. Leadership is a burden. It becomes a duty. It imposes awesome responsibilities.

Whether we like it or not, ladies and gentlemen, we are a world leader and those of you who are in the finance communities are also leaders. I guess, once in a while, some people think that I'm ~~one~~ ^{A LEADER}. I know that if I don't get many of the rewards of leadership, I surely have the responsibilities. One thing I've found out about the office of the Vice Presidency. It's short on authority and long on responsibility. That I know. But the minute ~~that~~ you're tagged as one of the leaders, you're expected ^{AND REQUIRED} to do better. ~~you're required to do better~~. You're expected to carry a bigger load. They insist that you carry a bigger load. And if you don't want to do it, quit being a leader. Start being a failure.

My wife often tells me, when I complain about some of the long hours and some of the difficulties that we encounter in public life, that I can always quit. No one's really forced me into it. There

wasn't any great national cry for Hubert Humphrey. I just sort of worked my way in on it.

And, I'll be quite candid -- I haven't heard very many people crying for you either, but you're in on it. You've done a great job. You're all very competent, able, and very gifted men, ~~and~~ any time we think the load is too heavy, we can unload it. Then you can be just one of the boys, and from that day on, your name won't be on stationery or in the paper, ~~and~~ you won't have to make any of these decisions. ~~It's kind of nice to get along to this age in life. I'm going to celebrate my 56th birthday pretty soon. You get to be more emancipated as you go along. You don't really quite worry so much about what you say, or even whether people like it. You just sort of speak out. I kind of look forward to all the years ahead, because each year I'm going to be just a little more cantankerous as I go along and hope that people won't mind too much.~~

I'm here to ask your participation in Plans for Progress. I'm not here to ask you to sign up, because that's the easiest thing in the world to do -- I'm out here to ask you to go to work. You are America. America is a business community, and businessmen have a responsibility much bigger than school teachers or social workers or politicians. The badge of success in this country is you, and what you represent. I don't know whether this is the way it should be, but that's it. Most people aspire to success, and one form of success is to lead a great business corporation, a financial institution, or a great company. And that's a noble inspiration.

American business is possibly the most compassionate and socially concerned enterprise system in the world. We say so, and I think we have a right to believe so. But I want you now, as men who are gifted and experienced in the subject of investment, to make an investment in human beings. I said to a group the other day that you can't have jobs without investment. I was speaking at the 175th anniversary of the New York Stock Exchange in New York. And I also said that you can't have investment unless you have jobs, because investment without people at work soon becomes insolvent investment. But investment produces the same jobs that provide the solvency for the investment. We need your help with people. We need your help in seeing to it that people who are in the minority groups in this country, as we call them, people that have been disadvantaged, deprived, people who are the victims of long-established cultural prejudice, that those people get their chance, their break. And I want you to be as ingenious in finding out how to give these people an opportunity as some of us have been ingenious in denying it.

I've said to our Civil Service Commission here in Washington when they've said, "Well, we just don't know how we can hire some of these people," I've said, "Why don't you get as smart figuring out how to hire them as you did for 100 years how to deny hiring them, and then you'll find out how to get them hired and how to rewrite the standards." After all, practically every rule and regulation we live by was written by another man. They're not divine edicts. We can take a good look at our hiring practices, a good look at our promotion practices, and

do the job that needs to be done because it's right to do.

I end up on this note. I'm in charge of the President's Council on Youth Opportunity. There is a need for the employment of two million, at a minimum, disadvantaged young people in America this summer. Two million. The rate of unemployment among Negro youth is about three times the rate it is among white youth. The rate of unemployment among Negro girls is about three times what it is among Negro boys. I know that everyone in this room is a member of the Establishment, including me. I've always wanted to be. I've worked hard to get there. And you are the Establishment, and I'm part of it. We have more to lose than anyone, if things go sour in this country.

My father reminded me a long time ago, and, by the way, he was a good businessman. Any man that could stay in business for 50 years in South Dakota and remain solvent was a good businessman. During those hard days of the Depression and the dust storms, the drought, and the low prices, we made it, and we still have the business. In case you ever get out there, we would like to have you drop in. We need your help. But my father told me a long time ago, during the Depression years, and I've never forgotten it, "Son, we're not doing very well, and we owe a lot of bills, and we a lot of back taxes, but the people that are really in trouble and that are marching out on those streets (At this time, I remember, there was a parade going through our town of about 10,000 irate farmers), and if these people ever break loose, the first windows they'll break will be ours. They think we're well off. We have a car -- they don't know it isn't paid for. We

have merchandise -- they don't know that we owe the bills. We have a building -- they don't know that we have it mortgaged. They just don't know.

Gentlemen, we have everything to lose and everything to save. I know that many of you are as concerned as you can be about the conditions that prevail in our cities today. I know how concerned you are over the possibilities of violence and riots. We call it the long, hot summer. You've read about it in the papers. Many of you are from the great cities of America, and your local governments are taking steps -- much needed steps -- to mobilize the human resources of your community to provide opportunity for young Americans. We need a minimum of 1½ million jobs, and preferably, 2 million jobs this summer for young Americans.

America is getting younger all the time. There are more young people today than ever before in our lives and, while America is mostly employed, there is a high rate of unemployment between young people in the age 16-20, particularly in minority groups -- Negro-Americans, Puerto Rican-Americans, Mexican-Americans, poor whites that often come from the hill country and the poor land country, and the American Indians.

I've been preaching, begging, and appealing to American business to take this into their hands and do something about it. And I'm going to get my licks in with you. Are you going to continue to reward violence, gentlemen, or are you going to act before the violence? I speak the truth. In my own city of Minneapolis a year ago, there was

violence on our streets. They literally wrecked six blocks of my city in a violent riot. They wanted 200 jobs. I say "they", and I mean those who were engaged in this violation of law and this violence. They couldn't get them. A week after the violence, 2,000 jobs were available. Just ask yourself a question: Is that the way we are to operate? Are we to honor the demagogues, the militant? Are we to wait until they stir up trouble before we act? Or are we going to act before the trouble? Why don't we be as smart as the British Tory, at least? We could always see trouble coming down the road and make the necessary adjustments before it was too late.

And I'm speaking to the people here who have it in their hands to do something about it. I was at Huntsville, Alabama, last night, and met with the finest group of people that I'll ever meet with in my life -- white and colored. And I heard them plead for jobs. And I was in Dallas and heard the same plea. And there's no use in going to the Welfare Department for jobs. They don't have jobs in the Welfare Department -- they have handouts. We don't want a country based on handouts. We want a country based not on the welfare state theme, but on the state of opportunity; training, opportunity for jobs, work, and it's a whole lot better that a man gets a job, even if he doesn't do too well at the job and is paid on that job, than it is to have to increase your police department, and pick up the pieces after you've had trouble. I've been at this long enough now to speak so candidly that sometimes it hurts and gets me in trouble for speaking so candidly. But there is no use to talk to a boy about doing a man's job. There is

no use speaking to a social worker about hiring, when hiring is done by industry. We've got to have the people that count in this country stand up and be counted. And you're either going to do it now, or you're going to do it later. We either going to do it willingly, or we'll do it under duress, and you know it.

Look at what happened on the West Coast. After the Watts, after Oakland, after San Francisco, after bloodshed, after riots, after violence -- then we got busy. And the government poured in millions of dollars and the state poured in millions of dollars and industry poured in millions of dollars. And now they have jobs.

I just don't want people to think that that's the way you get jobs. It's sort of like some of our foreign aid programs -- it's hard for a country to get a foreign aid program (I can say this in the State Department, I guess) unless they could show that they had a lot of Communists that were threatening them. If they had enough Communists lined up, somebody would say they'd better get foreign aid. Well I always believed that you should have foreign aid before the Communists. I don't happen to think that you need the Red Devil to make you do what you ought to do anyway. I don't think we have to have trouble to make us do what we ought to do before the trouble starts. So I want to get that little lick in -- I know that isn't what you came here for, but I just wanted to hand that to you, because we need your help. And if you're from New York get in there and help the mayor with his program. If you're from Chicago or Pittsburgh, or Cleveland, -- wherever you're from -- get in there and help. There are cities in

America today that are targeted for trouble. Just exactly as we know in our Central Intelligences that there are hot spots in the world, we know that there are hot spots in America. We've had some agitators and demagogues come through this town right here, and other towns, and said that we're marked. They've been able to produce what they've said they would. I believe in taking them seriously. When a man comes in here and says that he's going to take over, and he's taken over some place else, I say, "Look, it's time to go to work. In fact, it's later than you think."

So we have two things to ask you: Invest in human resources -- it's the best investment you'll ever make. Nobody has a greater stake in good people than you. You have a fiduciary responsibility to the people. You are professional investors. You know what it means to invest, and you know the importance of a sound investment. You understand the importance of profits and loss. And I can't think of a group that we could come to that would more fully buttress what Charlie Spahr's trying to do, and what Hobart Taylor and others are trying to do here than the men whom I'm speaking to right now. You're the men who say that you like to protect the value of the dollar, and you do a good job at it. Let's protect the value of human dignity too, because the dollar isn't worth a hoot unless people are around. It's human dignity that makes the dollar important, and the only reason that the value of the dollar needs to be protected is because of human dignity. So they're not in contradiction. You can be a generous and compassionate

man at the same time that you're a hard-headed businessman. You can have a warm heart and a hard head, and they work together. Take a hard, cold decision on what needs to be done, and still be a very considerate person. In fact, you can't be very compassionate unless you've got something to be compassionate with. We don't need people's good words. We need their good works.

I'm generally softer in my remarks when I come a little earlier. I have a low blood sugar count about 5:00, I guess, and you caught me at one of those times. I want to thank you for what you have done. I know you've done many good things. I know that you've been the bulwark in many communities of all the things that I've talked about here today. Give us your help in Plans for Progress. Give us your help in merit employment. Give us your help in this summer program. Find out what your community is doing to spare itself trouble. Find out what you can do to help some young man or some young woman have a meaningful summer in a job in free enterprise, in a job in a bank, in a job in a department store, a factory, or some place where they can earn their way and get some of the wonderful experience of good simple hard work. It's mighty good therapy for this country. I think that many of our problems that we have today would be overcome if people understood that it was the best therapy of all.

Thank you very much.



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