



National Telephone Cooperative Association

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February 5, 1968

Miss Barbara Ramsey
Appointment Secretary
New Senate Office Building
Room 5121
Washington, D. C.

Dear Miss Ramsey:

Under separate cover you will receive
the tape of the Vice President's speech given
January 31, 1968 at the National Telephone
Cooperative Association Annual Meeting.

Sincerely,

(Miss) Anne M. Arnold
Secretary to:
Robert J. Brown
Executive Assistant

TRANSCRIPT OF ADDRESS BY THE VICE PRESIDENT TO THE
NATIONAL TELEPHONE COOPERATIVE ASSOCIATION ANNUAL
MEETING, 31 JANUARY 1968

INTRODUCTION

(Ransom Knutson, President of North Dakota Association of Rural Telephone Cooperatives) Ladies and gentlemen, it is my honor to introduce a gentleman who has long been a friend of rural telephony, a supporter of our program from the days in the United States Senate. Ladies and gentlemen -- the Vice President of the United States

Thank you. It is a great pleasure. Thank you very, very much. My goodness. Thank you very much. Thank you my good friend, Mr. Knutson, thank you so much. To President Christenson and to your General Manager, Dave Fullarton, and to all of the good delegates of the rural telephone association. I've been in this ballroom in the Mayflower Hotel, I guess at least two or three hundred times during my 20 years here in Washington, but I don't know of any time that I have ever seen it filled with more wonderful people and for a better occasion than this one. I want to congratulate you on your presence here and on bringing yourselves here to Washington to kind of give us a little lift of our spirits. We can use it on these days. Thank you so much. I explained to Mr. Christenson and Mr. Fullarton that I had a rather tight schedule today but I wanted very much to come by just to say hello to you. You are very fortunate because sometimes

when I get wound up on one of these occasions you are apt to miss your lunch. But we have our regular cabinet meeting of the President's Cabinet on Wednesday noon and so I will have to be going to that, and that is one thing for which I'm never late. And, that's a good idea. I know that you have many interests as citizens of this great country and I know of course that you have a particular interest in legislation that is now pending before the Congress of the United States and I'm happy to tell you that the bill in which you have a great interest, H. R. 12066, is a bill in which this Administration has great interest and there isn't a shadow of doubt in my mind that it is going to become the law of the land. It is just a matter of the days and time that it will take but you can surely help it. I was told that yesterday morning things were going great guns for everything before the rules committee of the House and then they had what they call these quorum calls -- that means that all the Congressmen must report to duty at the main station, namely, the House of Representatives and they weren't able to complete consideration of the bill, but any bill that passes the House Agriculture Committee by a vote of 23 to five after several months of hearings has a mighty good backing and good solid support. Now of course if I were you I would work on those five just to make sure that they are not out-working you. Never take anything for granted

in this community. Just remember, even though you had a four -- almost a five -- to one advantage in the committee, just remember that you have a number of people in the House of Representatives that need your personal attention -- need your personal attention -- and the same thing is true of the United States Senate. But, I preside over the Senate. I feel much more confident about what is going to happen over there. I have been interested in your program and our program of rural telephone cooperatives for many years in the Congress of the United States. In fact some of you might recall that I was one of the Senators some years back that sponsored an amendment to the REA bill at the time to include the rural telephone program so we started to get financing for our rural telephone systems. Now things have changed greatly since that time. Rural America has changed and my how it has changed in the last 20 years, this last quarter of a century and it is going to change even more and it must and that is why your presence here in the nation's capital is so important at this particular time. We live in a nation today of 200 million people and it is growing very rapidly. Yet 70% of the entire population of this land lives on 1% of the land. 70% of the population on 1% of the land. It is an urbanized America they call it and yet within 50 years -- a half a century it's changed from what was predominately a rural oriented America to an urbanized, industrialized

America; but that is an over simplification because there is so much in America that still relates to the land and still relates to the village and the hamlet and the small town, the smaller city and the farm so much of it, both in terms of heritage, our cultural orientation and the necessities of tomorrow. We're going to have 100 million more Americans at a minimum between now and the year 2000. You see, things are growing in America. I hope they're improving, but one thing I'm sure is they're expanding. 100 million more citizens yet to be in this country in the last third of the 20th century and your children are going to live to see that last third of the 20th century and I'm beginning to take my Geritol in the hopes that I'm going to make it too. I surely do want to be around there for the year 2000. I see no reason I shouldn't make it. I want to make sure that all of these predictions that I have been making come true and if not then I want to be around for those who like to criticise to say I always told you he didn't know what he was talking about. But what's going to happen to this America in the next 33 years? Well, the promises are very great. The possibilities are unlimited. Of course, our major task is to keep this world from blowing itself to pieces. This same mankind that has created this fantastic thing called science and technology that can be of such a blessing to mankind has also created through science and technology the weapons of total destruction. And, the real issue before you is the moral quality of man. Whether or not we have developed a sense of

moral quality and conviction wherein we can direct these tremendous energies that we have and these great resources for the good of mankind or whether we're going to find ourselves caught up in hatred and bitterness and anger and finally in struggle and war that destroys everything that God has created on this earth. That is the real question and everyone of us must carefully consider that question and that is why it is so very important even now and even more important now then ever before that we have the vision of the tomorrow that we want, that we have some idea of the kind of a world in which we want to live -- and I say world, my dear friends, because what is going to happen to America will not be determined just by what happens in our midwest where I live but it may very well be determined what happens in the Middle East with people that you have never met in a part of the world that you have maybe never visited where the great power confrontation takes place in the Mediterranean and the ancient lands of Biblical, of Biblical history and of the Biblical times. Or maybe what will happen to America will be determined much less by what happens in the northeast or southwest or the southeast or the northwest but may be determined by what happens in southeast Asia. That is the kind of world we're living in and that is why we have to be concerned about every part of this world, that is why there is no place to hide any longer. There is no way that we can protect ourselves by just holding up here at home, hoping that something won't happen. We are caught up in what Wendel Wilkie called "one time

one world" and that world is smaller every day. The neighborhood or community is more constricted every day. And what happens in any part of the world any day can affect us for the time immemorial. But at least what we can do here at home -- the least that we can do -- is to build an America that is strong, not only strong in terms of its obvious power, of its military, but strong in its economy, strong in its faith, strong in its unity, strong in its young people, educated, its people healthy, its resources developed. And, if there is any one thing that is going to be needed these next 30 years, it is to find the place where the new 100 million Americans are going to live. And that place is here -- this great expanse of this continent. We call it the urban-rural balance, the town and country, and this is where you come in. When we bring electricity, for example, to all the towns and villages in rural America we begin to make possible the good life. When we bring a modern telephone or communications system to rural America or to the country or the town, we begin to make what we call the modern America, the possibilities of the good life. Our young people are not going to go to the smaller towns and the cities and into the rural areas of America unless that part of America offers the same opportunities as the great city. Many people leave the rural America to come to the city in the hope that it's going to give them the great new opportunity of their life, only to find those hopes dashed. What I am saying to you quickly and

succinctly is this: that we need the best schools that we can provide where you live. We need the best communication that modern science can provide -- right where you live. We need the best of electrical power and energy development -- right where you live. We need the best in telephone systems. Yes, in television and radio -- right where you live. We need modern hospitals, we need cultural centers. We need small industries that provide jobs -- right where you live. This is the only way that I know that we're going to be able to attract the population that is coming and spread it out across this land so that it is there for opportunity. You can't force Americans to move because we believe in freedom of choice and freedom of movement. What we have to do is offer incentive. What we have to do is to offer the opportunity, the opportunity that the great hinterland of this nation can make possible to them. Yes, there is fresh air, and we can have clean water and fresh air if we take care of it. We can have the wide open spaces. We can have all of the things that we dreamed of and indeed that our memories bring us back to from our childhood -- what we call that good country living. But let's face it. Good country living doesn't have much attraction to young people now unless it means good roads, good schools, good hospitals, good homes, good

good jobs, economic opportunity, modern living conditions. And that's why I think the great task of America now is not merely to rebuild its cities, which we hear so much about and which is vital, but also to spread out the benefits of modern science and technology and modern living to the vast area of America that you represent in this group. And let me say to you that it costs much less to do that than it does to see the festering sores of slums grow, grow and grow. It costs much less, may I say, to help develop new towns than to rebuild old ones. It costs much less to see modern systems of communication and transportation than it does to tear out vast areas of already constructed areas which the costs are unbelievably high. It isn't as if we're in competition between the great city, the metropolitan area and the country. They complement each other. They complement each other. And what you're doing and what you're talking about now is not just a telephone line for the farmer out in the Midwest or the South, or the Southeast, or the West, or the Northeast. Even though that's important. What you're doing is building to put the phrase of the engineer and the political science, the infrastructure, the basic structure, for the spreading of this society on a basis of equality of opportunity all across this vast land. You're doing and you're planning now what the great railroads did a hundred and some years ago to span the continent with

with steel rails, with a thread of steel that united this country into one, one of the great miracles of all time. Now, what you are saying is we have united the country physically. Now lets unite it in terms of opportunity, let's unite it in every way that we can. I want to pledge you here this morning our unqualified support in this effort. I love this country as you do. Last night it was my privilege to participate in a great performance at the Ford Theatre where our beloved Great Emancipator, Abraham Lincoln, was struck down by the assassin's bullet. That theatre has been reopened and every time that I go there and every time I think about it, my mind is filled with the sayings of that great man who had such trial and tribulation. As I said, he was a man of much kindness and such strength , such great honor and yet pathos, and of humility and yet honor. And do you know what he said. He said that about our country that we shall either meanly lose it or nobly save, the last, best hope of earth. And really that is what it is all about. We are the last, best hope of this earth in terms of man-made institutions. The whole world in a very real sense, the whole cause of freedom depends on us. It is a terrible burden, but, my fellow Americans, we have no choice. Because if we are unable to bear the burden of responsibility, who is? If we're unwilling to stand up for the cause that is right and just, who will? We have no other

choice and that is why we must build America strong at home. We must rid ourselves of prejudices, of bitterness, and we must as never before seek every possible way to unite this country and its people, to give everybody their chance, to work, to live, to be themselves. As one great poet said, "every man his chance to become whatever his manhood or his vision can make him." That is the promise of America. I think you agree with me. I want to keep you well. I must go. Thank you so much.



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