



OFFICE OF THE VICE PRESIDENT

REMARKS

VICE PRESIDENT HUBERT HUMPHREY
BUILDING SERVICE EMPLOYEES' INTERNATIONAL
UNION CONVENTION
WASHINGTON, D. C.

MAY 6, 1968

One day last Fall -- a Wednesday, September 6, 1967 -- 22 of America's leaders came to the Cabinet Room in the White House to report to President Johnson on the situation in Vietnam and to give him their advice.

These men had just returned from Saigon, where they had gone at the President's request.

One member of that group -- and it is my privilege to recognize and salute him here today as one of this country's great private statesmen -- is the President of the Service Employees International Union, David Sullivan.

That Wednesday afternoon meeting was significant for two things.

One was the report those men made to the President.

They went directly to the point of the country's central concern, and they spoke in plain terms.

Differences were expressed. Disagreement and dissent were invited; but there was little of either. "Don't worry, Mr. President," one of them -- a Republican said -- "We were not brain-washed."

These men stated their common conclusion gravely and squarely: that this nation's course had to be expressed firmly -- to the end of securing an effective peace. They gave the President the strength of their own judgment and the collective wisdom of the millions of others for whom they spoke.

I know that I express for you here today the prayerful hope -- and the equally resolute purpose -- that this end will be served in the meeting being convened now in Paris.

I wish you could know how much American labor's firm resolve during this trying, tragic testing of freedom's mettle has contributed to giving your President a strength which only history will fully realize.

You do know -- from labor's own history -- the sometimes inhuman cost of advancing humanity's purpose, and the necessity of unity in time of adversity.

That September 6 meeting in the White House had another, perhaps even larger significance.

That group included nine government officials and representatives -- three members of the Senate, three Governors, a county officer, two Mayors. It also included 13 outstanding private representatives of labor, industry, communication media, veterans, civil rights and church groups.

This was a New Democracy at work -- a democracy of the taking of common council with citizen leaders of American life and thought and action, regarding people's important concerns.

This is vitally significant development in democracy's process.

Scores -- hundreds -- of meetings like that one on September 6 are held now -- day after day, on one critical subject or another.

All aspects of our national life are represented. The President finds out what people are thinking -- through those who are leaders in what people do. Those leaders find out what the President and those nearest him are thinking.

Twenty-five or thirty years ago it was a subject of political ridicule that Franklin Roosevelt told somebody to "check it with Sidney" -- Sidney Hillman, President of one of the great trade unions.

Today it has become part of the exercise of strong, responsible, responsive executive authority in American Government that the President himself "checks it" -- especially if it is important -- with the leaders of American labor, American business, university presidents, clergymen, civil rights leaders, and countless others.

It isn't a matter of reaching agreements this way, or making commitments. This is a process of getting advice that asks no consent.

"Checking it" does not diminish -- indeed it probably increases -- the weight and the loneliness of the President's responsibility for ultimate decision-making; for what checks out is usually the hard fact of wide difference and broad disagreement. But it means, too, the fuller recognition that in a democracy of 200 million members the strength of leadership depends on knowing, as close to first hand as possible, what that membership counsels and advises.

One of President Johnson's great contributions is that he has developed and used so fully this source of strength in the Presidency.

The next President of this country must be equally strong.

He will be. For he will recognize equally the force of this new informal federalism of public and private stewardship.

He will know from close experience that this New Democracy is significantly responsible for America's unprecedented legislative achievements during the past few years.

He will know, too, that American labor has played an effective and frequently decisive role in what are 7 years now of getting it done instead of just talking about it.

He will know that American labor is the strongest force for effective liberalism in the country today -- and that the record proves it.

I don't mean just legislation of special interest to labor -- as labor.

Sure, I think the McNamara-O'Hara Service Contracts Act is right -- and I know it was passed with the important help of this union.

Sure, I think the Act prohibiting Age Discrimination in Employment is right -- and I know it wouldn't have been passed without labor's support.

If raising the minimum wage to a one dollar and sixty cents an hour and extending it to another 12 million and a half employees were "special interest" legislation -- which it is not -- that is right too; and it wouldn't have happened without labor's support.

But I mean public interest legislation.

Labor voted "Aye" on the Civil Rights Acts of 1964 and 1965 and 1968, and they wouldn't have been passed without that vote.

Labor voted "Aye" on one Education Act after another -- and most of them would not otherwise have passed.

There was the Trade Expansion Act -- and the Economic Opportunity Act -- and the Model Cities Act -- and the housing acts -- and health acts -- and Medicare -- and more and more and more. Labor's vote has been "Aye" on all of them -- and thank heaven democracy's workings are good enough that these votes have been translated into the laws of the nation and the lives of its people.

Not by these laws alone -- but by the better working, too, of the society and the economy in which labor is now full partner and participant -- we have made great gains.

In the past 7 years, the individual worker's real purchasing power -- what he can buy with what he gets -- has gone up 18 per cent.

There are 10 million more people at work now than there were in 1961 -- and unemployment has been cut by more than a third despite an unprecedented increase in the work force.

Twelve million Americans have moved above the poverty line.

There are 2 and a quarter million more boys and girls in college now than there were 7 years ago.

Social Security benefits are up by 13 per cent.

These are only a few of the measures of what has happened in these 7 years of national and human betterment.

Yet with it all, with all of this progress and achievement, our interest today is not in what we have done. It is in all that is left to do.

The big figures on the credit side of our ledger don't cover the individual, human facts that remain on the debit side -- especially in the service industries -- including the area of this great union's particular concern.

Your organizing and our legislating have broken every record.

Yet too many people still live the fact of poverty.

Too many people are still unemployed.

Too many families still need decent homes.

Too many parents still can't give their children the education others get.

We are probably the only nation in the world today where the poor -- by our standard -- are a minority.

But the poverty of a single family is a stain on America's banner -- for that banner bears the legend of human dignity. Demeaning the humanity of those whom poverty affects, it demeans us all.

I count it my business this year -- in this campaign -- to set out what is necessary to assure every American -- if he will do his end of it -- the right to earn a decent living -- a decent wage on a decent job.

I'll do my business -- if you do yours.

I'll ask today -- as an immediate order of business -- your support of the Workers Safety Bills which are right now before the Senate and House Labor Committees.

Every year, over 14 thousand Americans die in on-the-job accidents. That's 7 people every working hour, one every eight-and-a-half minutes.

Every year, 2 million American workers suffer disabling injuries on the job. That's one thousand injuries every hour, seventeen every minute.

The statistics are clear. The need is clear. But let me tell you the opposition is just as clear. We need your help -- now -- on this legislation.

After that there will be more -- and more -- and more.

It was Samuel Gompers who states labor's goal in those simple terms -- "More. More. More."

Gompers went on to say, speaking for all those he represented so well, "I want...freedom to achieve and I will never consent to anything else."

So do you today. So do I "Freedom to achieve" is a reasonable demand. It has to be met.

George Meany -- labor statesman of the world and magnificent American -- has given this purpose its still fuller dimension:

"The distinguishing feature of the American system is its emphasis on people, on freedom, on free institutions, and on the opportunity for betterment."

This is it: "Freedom to achieve." "The opportunity for betterment."

These are the authentic voices of American labor. They are the authentic voices of all of America.

They tell us that what we did yesterday was important -- yesterday; that what we do today isn't enough unless it is better; that tomorrow will be lost unless we move still further ahead.

They tell us to get on with the job.

With your help, I propose to do just that.

Reason
Responsibility
Response

REMARKS

David Sullivan
Wm Sullivan

Mrs Humphrey

VICE PRESIDENT HUBERT HUMPHREY

BUILDING SERVICE EMPLOYEES' INTERNATIONAL UNION CONVENTION

WASHINGTON, D.C.

MAY 6, 1968

Endorsement
1st to do so

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and He will be. For he will recognize equally the force
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✓ ↙ He will know from close experience that this New Democracy
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Twelve million Americans have moved ^{out of} ~~above~~ the poverty line. and into good living

There are 2 and a quarter million more boys and girls in college now than there were 7 years ago.

Social Security benefits are up ~~by 13 per cent~~ ^{13 per cent}.

~~Medicare - Health - Consumers~~

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Do Better

9 Million
Depressed
and Sick

Senior Citizens
Housing -

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⌞ Your organizing and our legislating have broken every record.

⌞ Yet too many people still live the fact of poverty.

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⌞ But the poverty of a single family is a stain on America's banner -- for that banner bears the legend of human dignity.

Demeaning the humanity of those whom poverty affects, it demeans us all.

I count it my business this year -- in this campaign --
to set out what is necessary to assure every American --

if he will do his ~~part~~ ^{Part} of it -- the right to earn a decent living -- ^{at}
a decent wage on a decent job. ^{The right to learn + Earn}

and
I'll do my business -- ^{and} you do yours! -- ^{Together}

I'll ask today -- as an immediate order of business -- your
support of the Workers Safety Bills which are right now before
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Every year, over 14 thousand Americans die in on-the-job
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14th General Convention

Building Service Employees' International Union — AFL-CIO

AND we need
more training programs
like the one your union
sponsors here in the
District of Columbia -

∟ The statistics are clear. The need is clear. But let me tell you the opposition is just as clear. We need your help -- now -- on this legislation.

∟ After that there will be more -- and more -- and more.

∟ It was Samuel Gompers who stated labor's goal in those simple terms -- "More. ~~More. More.~~" *Produce more -
Earn more*

∟ Gompers went on to say, speaking for all those he represented so well, "I want... freedom to achieve and I will never consent to anything else."

That's what you want
So do you today. ∟ So do I. "Freedom to achieve" is a reasonable demand. It has to be met.

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