

REMARKS OF

VICE PRESIDENT HUBERT H. HUMPHREY

BEFORE THE AREA NEGRO LEADERS

- - -

Tuesday, September 10, 1968

Houston, Texas

**WARD & PAUL**

OFFICIAL REPORTERS

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(Remarks in progress).

We saw some things we didn't even know we were doing and as a result of that community self-survey, we raised money privately through the community activity. I led the effort. We had a series of meetings and panels for a year in my city, not just a survey, you know, where you file it away, but we went to work on it. We found, for example, in some of our hospitals that if you were black and you were a doctor, you couldn't practice. I found that in some of our hospitals if you were Catholic and a doctor, you couldn't practice. We found that not a single department store in our city hired a clerk, a sales lady or a sales man, except unless they were white. And we found a lot of those.

You know what we did? We did something about it. We went to work and did something about it. Not all I wanted to do but we made the beginnings. We passed the first fair employment practice ordinance in the United States with legal enforcement powers.

(Applause)

Now, I have been on this trail of human rights and human decency all of my life and I think I am on the right track, to be honest with you about it, and I will tell you why. We have been denying ourselves in this country an awful lot of talents out of bad habits and bad practices.

I was in Los Angeles today. I have a good friend there. He is a young fellow that does a lot of good basketball playing. He is a man I have known a long time, Elgin Baylor. He puts a few baskets through the hoops. If I could get as many votes as he gets baskets we both would be happy.

Why do I mention him? And there are many others that we could mention. My friend, Jackie Robinson, was here the other day, really one of Mr. Rockefeller's friends, but he has been a friend of mine and he came back and offered voluntarily to be of help to me. And he is just one man.

(A-plause)

I believe you will see that some of the people that even opposed me in this election will be very active today for our candidate and I know -- for their own reasons and good and

justifiable reasons, have a different point of view on matters relating to the Democratic Convention. I don't think we ever really disagreed on what we ought to do but we had some problems.

Now, there is so much talent in this country that goes unused because we close the door on them. There is so much opportunity in this country that is unexplored because we have lived in the patterns of segregation and discrimination and deprivation for so many people so long, and it isn't even good economics much less good morals.

We are beginning to find out that black entrepreneurship, black capitalism is as good as white. We are beginning to find out that people can do any job without regard to race. We are beginning to find out that some of the finest artists that we have, some of the greatest men and women in the field of literature, some of the outstanding professors, some of our greatest scientists, surely, and many of our greatest athletes, some of our finest architects are people who only a few years ago were the sons and daughters of the poorest of the poor, black or white.

We are beginning to find out that there is a tremendous resource here that has been unused, undeveloped, untapped.

So, I entered into the field of civil rights simply because I was brought up to believe that people were people and I was brought up -- somebody asked me once, he said, when did you get the spirit to be a civil rights man, so to speak, and I had somebody once ask me, what was it at the university that made you feel that you ought to be involved in civil rights?

I said the University didn't have anything to do with it at all. I was so blamed hard up and broke at the university I didn't have time to think about civil rights. I had two jobs. I was married. We had a baby and I was half starved. I mean, I didn't have time to be thinking about civil rights at that time. I was thinking about whether I could stay in school, but I had a father and a mother that brought me up to believe that there was a oneness of humanity, that people were people, and that while everyone should have pride in their race, in their families, in their culture, that there was basically a oneness of humanity and I believe that, and that is why I have been a worker in this field of human rights.

Now, we have got a whole body of civil rights law now. We have passed a lot of civil rights law. Our problem is not more law. It is the application of the law. That is number one.

The second thing is the practice of human respect for a human being.

(Applause)

I believe that a President can do an awful lot to set the example, just as a mayor of a city can, the governor of a state can, and many of us that are in leading public office

1 positions. We are the educators in many ways. We are the  
2 people that mold public opinion, at least we should, and we can  
3 set the standard. I think you people know here in this  
4 audience that I have worked diligently through my public life,  
in the Congress and as Vice President, to forward every aspect  
of a meeting of human rights and civil rights, every aspect.

(Applause)

5 We are going to do better. It doesn't do much good to  
6 say what I have said unless we can do something about the  
7 problems of deprivation, the alienation of people, the bitter-  
ness and frustration that comes from being pushed aside and  
quite candidly our young people today are not going to take it.

(Applause)

8 And the answer to it is not to suppress them. The  
9 answer is to try and find ways to work together. And that  
10 simply means that we have to get at these areas of slumism, and  
11 slumism, I have said, is worse than a slum because a slum  
represents broken down buildings, physical buildings, but  
12 slumism represents people as well as buildings that have been  
broken down, that have become despairing, that feel unneeded,  
13 unwanted, bitter, frustrated.

14 We have got to do something about it and we can.  
15 The way we do something about it is to do what I want done for  
me. Somebody once said, well, what do you think we ought to  
16 do? I said, give the other guy the same chance I got. It is  
17 just that simple. I had my chance. I was accepted. I wasn't  
discriminated against because my name was Horatio, the middle  
18 name. That is bad enough to have that. They accepted that.

(Laughter)

19 I met a fellow tonight that had a second name, Hubert, I  
20 was going to say to him how would you like to have the first  
name.

21 But I didn't have that. I didn't have to face that.  
22 I didn't have to face in a society that is essentially white,  
the color discrimination. I know that.

23 So, I think that not only should I see that the  
24 other fellow gets a chance as good as mine but I think he  
ought to get a little better chance because he had to wait so  
25 long.

(Applause)

26 You know, we talk a lot about equal opportunities and  
27 I talk about it a great deal. Now, the fact of the matter is  
28 for our kids -- let's talk about them and then I am going to  
29 yield this floor -- sometimes when we get along in our age,  
30 kind of hard to change habits. YMu know that. But, I surely  
31 think that whatever we do we ought to be thinking about young  
32 people that are coming along and yet unborn and everything that  
33 we do as we plan a city, think of an industry, plan a program  
34 of education, not necessarily to have it how it meets our needs



at your age and my age, but how is it going to meet the needs of that child, that four year old, that six year old, that ten year old. What kind of a life are they going to have?

And, therefore, when we say we want to give everybody an equal opportunity in education, that isn't enough for some people because some people have had it unequal for so long that in order to make it equal, you have got to give it a little more than equal for some time.

Now, let me give you an example. If a person is the victim of chronic malnutrition, I mean, your body, that you have had a bad diet or little or no food, and you are the victim of malnutrition, starvation, physical starvation, there isn't a doctor in the country that says, well, now what we ought to do is that I eat hamburgers, let him eat hamburgers. That isn't what they do. They put you into a hospital and say, now, look, we have got to get this body up to a point where that body can consume or can digest the same kind of food that I get. In other words, special treatment. Chemicals, vitamins, nutritional food, until the balance is restored.

(Applause)

That is what we have got to do.

This is why we need the best teachers where we have the most serious problems of education, and isn't it kind of ridiculous how we build things upside down? In many areas of our country, and I speak, of course, without any reference to a particular area, we have the oldest schools, the poorest schools in the poorest areas where the need is the greatest, and we have the newest schools, the best schools, in the area where the people are the wealthiest, where many of their children can be sent to private schools, and where the need is the least. It is just upside down.

(Applause)

Now, somebody is going to say, well, there he is. He is promising a lot of things and it is going to cost so terribly much.

Let me tell you what costs. Doing nothing. It costs a whole lot more to get sick than it does to stay well. Crime, delinquency, welfarism, unemployment, frustration, bitterness, those are the most expensive, the most expensive developments in human society, and we had better start measuring and weighing and adding up those costs.

Job training doesn't cost nearly as much as keeping a family on welfare. A day care center so that a mother that wants to work and doesn't want to have to rely on just Aid to Dependent Children, a day care center is a lot better for that mother than it is just to have a welfare check.

(Applause)

A health center in a neighborhood that can give some outpatient care and prenatal care and just general health care

1 is a lot cheaper than disease and an increase in the rate  
2 of infant mortality, et cetera. I have gone across the length  
3 and breadth of this country pointing out what we face and  
4 let me tell you it is not right. It is a fact that a black boy  
5 doesn't have the same chance and you know it. It is a fact  
6 that the mother in a black family runs the risk, a greater  
7 risk of ill health and of losing her baby than a white mother.  
8 It is a fact, because poverty knows no race, that there are  
9 more poor whites than there are poor blacks, but after having  
10 said that all I can say is we ought to try to have fewer of  
11 both and get on with the job of doing something about it.

(Applause)

12 We have made some wonderful beginnings and we really  
13 have and don't be discouraged. Listen, things have really  
14 happened in this country in the last ten years, believe me  
15 they have happened, but some people say, well if there is so  
16 much that has been done, why is there so much that people are  
17 unhappy about?

18 Well, there was an old French philosopher who once  
19 visited America, whose name was deTocqueville and he said  
20 something like this, that those conditions of poverty which  
21 seem inevitable, which seem intolerable, sometimes become  
22 inevitable. But once that you find that you can do something  
23 about things, then the conditions of poverty are intolerable,  
24 and they have to do something about them.

25 In other words, when you see light at the end of the  
tunnel you want to run faster to get there, but if you don't  
see any light there, what is the use of running? You may  
never get any place.

Hopelessness leads to despair and despair just leads  
to the living dead.

By the way, there are many ways to kill a man. You  
can break his spirit and break his heart. You can deny him a  
chance to even be a man and that leaves him for all practical  
purposes dead.

Our job is to see that people live in this country.  
This country started out with the proposition that there are  
certain God given inalienable rights and one of these is life,  
not just survival, life. A lot of difference between surviving  
and living. Living means life that is meaningful and those God  
given rights, inalienable they call them, are life and  
liberty and the pursuit of happiness. It didn't say you were  
guaranteed happiness but you had a right to pursue it.

I think we can do something about these things and  
this is why I come to you to ask your help and above all I  
seek your counsel.

I am sure that none of us know all the answers. I  
know you are going to read an awful lot of things that we have  
done that are wrong. I have been listening to some of the opposi-

1 tion already. They are telling us all the mistakes we have  
2 made in the poverty program. I think that is right. But the  
3 greatest mistake is that we have let poverty linger with us  
so long. That is an incredible mistake, an intolerable mistake.

(Applause)

4 I read about how much it costs to train a young boy  
5 or a young girl in a Job Corps center. I don't read about how  
6 much it costs to let him stand idle on the street corner. I  
only read that when he gets in trouble, they are on him, they  
are on him.

7 We have taken thousands and thousands and you have  
8 taken thousands and thousands of young men and women off these  
street corners and they have gotten jobs, and they have become  
self-sustaining citizens, and we have got -- we just scratched  
the surface.

9 I read about, for example, the mistakes that we made  
10 in the OEO, in the War on Poverty, the money that has been  
wasted, and I suppose that is right. I am not going to deny  
it.

11 But I want to tell you something. Poverty has been  
12 with us longer than cancer and people have been trying to find  
a cure for cancer as long as there is modern medicine and we  
13 still haven't found it, but we don't go around condemning the  
doctors. We say give them a little more. Let them have some  
14 more time. Give them some more research money. Let them seek  
new ways of trying to find that cure for cancer. We don't write  
them up as failures and boondogglers. We say they are  
15 scientists. Look, they might get a breakthrough. Somebody  
thinks he has found something that may work. It may work on a  
16 few patients and we thank the Lord that it will.

17 The same thing I trust on this War on Poverty. We  
are experimenting still. We don't know all the answers by a  
18 long shot. We are experimenting. We are finding some things  
that do work for a few people and we need to build on that,  
stand on it. We find that you can do job training. We find  
19 that it is hard training a hard core unemployed, a man that  
has never had a job, that has never known work discipline,  
that has never had a factory experience, that has never been  
20 trusted, that has never been given a chance. You can't expect  
just to offer him a job and that he will be a success. You have  
21 got to condition him. YVU have got to help him. You have got  
to help him until he gains his sense of confidence, until he  
22 gains his self-respect. That is what it is all about.

23 I don't know all the answers but I will tell you  
what I do know. I know that we can find them. Any country  
24 that can put a man on the moon ought to be able to help put a  
man on the street to work.

(Applause)

(Standing ovation)

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25 K Street, N.E., Washington, D.C. 20002

Have you got a question or two? We are ready for your questions.

MR. HAYES: Mr. Vice President --

VICE PRESIDENT HUMPHREY: Yes, sir.

MR. HAYES: My name is R. L. Hayes and I am an elected representative of the poor.

VICE PRESIDENT HUMPHREY: Yes, sir.

MR. HAYES: And most of the people you see here tonight, Mr. Vice President, represent the black middle class of this community. Very few of the poor are represented here. I would appreciate it very much if you would expand upon what you said downstairs in regards to the young and the poor of this community and all over this nation. And when the time comes in November, that we need the young and the poor to get out and work because they mean votes.

VICE PRESIDENT HUMPHREY: Yes, they do. What I tried to say, I didn't have any prepared remarks particularly on that, but what I tried to say was, first of all, that I need in my campaign, number one, the idealism, the enthusiasm, the commitment of the young. I have associated my whole life with young people, in my office, in my work, as a youth leader.

Might I just add that I have walked in as many ghettos of this country as any public man has with few exceptions. Maybe one other man walked in as many or more and that is the late Senator Robert Kennedy.

(Applause)

I said I wanted to see not only that these young men and women had a chance to participate but that I could receive their counsel, that the door of the White House, their White House, not mine, would be open to them, not only for their views and for their expressions of concern but for their advice.

You know, our young people today are really well informed young people. They are older young people by the experiences of life than some of us were when we were very young.

I have young people in my family. I know a little bit about that. They have had a better break than most kids have had.

I want to see the poor have something to say about the decisions made about this poverty program, and you know I do.

(Applause)

I want to see the Moden Cities program include in its planning and in those that do plan it that the residents of the area where the Model Cities program is to be applied, may have something to say about that program before it is applied.

(Applause)

Now, let me tell you, I can tell you right now what people are going to say. Let's say that everything works out as



1 I hope it will and then we try to do some of these things. We  
2 are going to make some mistakes and you are going to find  
3 somebody that is representing the poor that just louses things  
4 up, but I want to tell you, some of the folks that represent  
5 the rich louse it up, too.

6 (Applause)

7 And it will be written up that they made mistakes, that their  
8 judgments were bad, that they didn't spend the money right.

9 Ladies and gentlemen, everything requires experience  
10 and when people have had no opportunity for decision-making,  
11 no opportunity for planning, no opportunity for making their  
12 own decisions, they are going to make some mistakes.

13 Most of us learn through making our mistakes and I  
14 am prepared as President of this country to publicly state that  
15 I know that we will be making some mistakes but I would rather  
16 make the mistakes of the mind rather than the mistakes of the  
17 heart.

18 (Applause)

19 So, we are going to have to take those chances and  
20 anybody that comes to you and says, well, look, you just follow  
21 me, it is all just going to work out great, he is just fooling.

22 I don't know if it is all going to work out great.  
23 But I do know this, unless we try, nothing is going to happen,  
24 and I know we have rising expectations in the United States  
25 just like we have got them in Africa and Asia and we have got  
a better chance of meeting them, and very frankly, friends,  
my fellow Americans, if we don't do something about poverty  
and inequities and poverty and justice here in America, what makes  
you think we can do anything in Africa and Asia?

VOICE: Mr. Vice President, downstairs, sir, you  
talked about the politics of contact and confrontation.

VICE PRESIDENT HUMPHREY: Yes, sir.

QUESTION: Now, in regards to young alienated black  
people, what do you plan to do to further this philosophy with  
special efforts on riot control?

VICE PRESIDENT HUMPHREY: Well, I talk with them,  
I meet with them. I have never turned a man away from my door.  
I never cared whether he liked me or didn't. As a matter of  
fact, some of the folks that like me the most tell me the  
least truth and I really just open my door to them, wherever  
I can, if I have the time and the chance, trying to make the  
chance. I sit down with groups of people. I frequently am  
told you ought not to do it. They are going to embarrass  
you, Mr. Vice President. They are going to attack you. I have  
been attacked so many times it has almost become a pattern of  
life.

I think we must be willing to listen. I think we must  
be willing to let people know that we care, and as I have said  
to many of the young men and women that I have met with, particularly

1 in the black community that have been very embittered, alienated  
2 is the word, I have said to them after they got all through  
3 with it, I said, what you have told me I do not deny but please  
4 do not doubt my sincerity. You may doubt my capacity but  
5 don't doubt my sincerity.

6 I have entered public life for one reason, for human  
7 benefit, and when I talk about human betterment I talk about  
8 your betterment and my bettermen. I talk about it for everyone  
9 and I not only talk about it, I am willing to work for it and  
10 I have had a record of working for it.

11 (Applause)

12 This gentleman right here.

13 VOICE: (Question inaudible)

14 VICE PRESIDENT HUMPHREY: Well, it isn't the same with  
15 me, my good man.

16 VOICE: (Question inaudible)

17 VOICES: We can't hear.

18 VICE PRESIDENT HUMPHREY: The gentleman said  
19 that there has been a great deal of emphasis upon what was called  
20 law and order and he said that he wondered why there hadn't  
21 been -- I think I paraphrase you right -- why hadn't there been  
22 an equal emphasis upon justice. In other words, the alleviation  
23 of the inequities, where black folks are and where other  
24 folks are, too.

25 Now, I have made that emphasis. I addressed the  
National Press Club in W'shington -- that is the Press Corps  
in the Nation's Capital -- on the subject of civil order and  
civil justice, one and inseparable, two sides of the same  
coin. I spoke to several thousand, about eight or nine  
thousand middle income, higher income, professional and  
middle and blue collar workers today in California and I spoke  
on the theme of the just society, the elimination of the inequi-  
ties, the breeding grounds of crime, the festering grounds of  
violence.

I happen to believe that building codes ought to  
be enforced just like other codes of law should be enforced.

(Applause)

I believe in law and order. I personally believe that violence  
is not going to settle our problems. But I also believe that  
the same public official that took the responsibility to enforce  
the law also took the responsibility to see to it that the laws  
are just and that the inequities which exist in this society  
to the best of his ability shall be removed.

I have many ideas about law and order, the improvement  
of our police departments, the professionalization, their  
knowledge in human relations.

When I was mayor of my city the first thing I did  
with my police department was to send the officers to a training  
school in the field of race relations, the first thing I did.

(Applause)

I had a law and order in my community but I did not want the City of Minneapolis to be remembered for its Police Department alone. I wanted it to be remembered for its human relations, for its jobs, for its schools, for its housing and for many other things.

We had the first War on Poverty around there, if you will permit me to brag just a little bit. We looked at our welfare rolls. I was a young man when I came in. I was 33 years of age as Mayor of the City, unafraid, let it go, you know, with the bar bell, and I looked at the welfare rolls and I said many of these people on these rolls could work. Those that can't work should have better income and better protection. Those that can should have jobs.

This was 1947 and we started a program of vocational rehabilitation through our training schools, through our institutes, through our employment service, job placement, through our Chambers of Commerce, our labor movement, through our churches, and we were able to remove from the welfare rolls to productive, well paying jobs that improved income double or treble what they got on relief over 80 per cent of the welfare clients of my city. And, the others got better care.

I happen to believe in compassion but I believe that what most people want is a chance. I think most people would like a chance to earn their way and those that can't would like to have at least some dignity, some semblance of dignity through some income maintenance which I am going to see that they get if I am President of the United States.

(Applause)

This question was very apropro, my friends, and I am not going to demagogue the question of law and order in this country. I believe in law and order but I also believe in social justice and if I am President of the United States, you will get both.

(Applause)

VOICE: The hour is late, it is almost midnight, and the Vice President will have time for just one more question. Now, just before we do that, before we do that, I want to introduce some distinguished guests who accompanied the Vice President on his trips who came on to Houston with him. Mr. Ofield Duke, who is on the Vice President's staff. Will you stand up and be recognized?

(Applause)

Seated on the platform is Mr. Louis Markham, who is Vice Chairman of the Democratic National Committee and has just been appointed by the Vice President.

And now, one last question.

VOICE: What position exactly do you take as far as law and order is concerned? I want to know where exactly do

1 you stand for law and order?

2 VICE PRESIDENT HUMPHREY: Let me be very frank with  
3 you. Your question is right to the point. I don't want to have  
4 any misunderstanding. I want you to know what kind of a  
5 fellow you are going to get.

6 I never believed in a riot. I don't think it helps  
7 anything. I want to start right ~~ot~~ with that.

8 (Applause)

9 I think there are many ways of riot control. You  
10 don't need police brutality. Many ways we have learned particu-  
11 larly through leadership of people within the ghetto itself  
12 as we call it, people that have the respect and have the atten-  
13 tion of the inhabitants of the poorer sections.

14 Now, I am not one of those kind of persons that says  
15 just because a man or a group stirs up trouble that the way  
16 we will handle him is to punish him by no programs of social  
17 justice and social advancement. To the contrary. Just as I  
18 said that we cannot condone the violence -- and by the way, the  
19 first victims of the violence are the poor themselves.

20 (Applause)

21 -- just as we can't condone that, we have got to make up our  
22 minds that even though the violence may take place and even  
23 thought we are compelled to put it down, that we proceed  
24 with these programs of housing, jobs and education, but basically  
25 of respect.

What you want from me more than anything, you don't  
want me to be going around pampering you. You want me to respect  
you as a man. That is what I do.

(Applause)

We can have both. We can have that respect but we can  
argue about it, man to man, toe to toe, disagree as American  
citizens in the peaceful processes of this democracy which  
sometimes gets a little rugged, and then we can go ahead and  
start developing programs and doing something about them, but  
what I am going to need is your help.

This country -- let's assume that the blessing that  
we all pray for comes, that this war is over, that we can  
divert the resources that we used in this struggle for  
social purposes. I warn you as I did downstairs to a much  
larger audience, I warn you that unless we get out and do our  
job of convincing the public, those social dividends, those  
peace dividends, will never go to the ghettos and never go to  
the poor. They will come in tax reductions, they will come  
in this and they will come in that, when you and I know if we  
are going to have a free society in this country we are going  
to have to rebuild vast areas of our cities. We are going to  
have to do things along this line.

(Applause)

I was in the Congress of Korea. Don't tell me. I



1 was there. I remember. We didn't get one social welfare  
2 program worth its salt passed, not one. We had all the savings  
3 of peace and I don't know where it went, but it sure didn't  
4 go to the poor. We didn't have any Federal Aid to Education.  
5 We didn't have any War on Poverty. We didn't have any massive  
6 slum clearance. We didn't have any Model Cities program. We  
7 didn't have any Medicare. We didn't have a lot of things.

8 I don't know what happened to all of it. All I know  
9 is that the people that were looking for the chance that they  
10 had waited a 100 years for never got it.

11 (Applause)

12 I can tell you that even with the war, more has been  
13 done in the last five or six years than any comparable period  
14 in history and give us peace and give yourself a man in the  
15 White House that cares deeply, whose very life has been wrapped  
16 up in your life, your life and my life, give us a chance and  
17 we will do something in this country that is worthwhile.

18 (Applause)

19 (Standing ovation)

20 # # #  
21  
22  
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24  
25



Speech Of  
VICE PRESIDENT HUBERT H. HUMPHREY

Tejas Room  
Rice Hotel  
Houston, Texas

September 10, 1968

*"Coffee with Humphrey"*  
*Congressman Eckhardt host*

1 (Due to detention by Secret  
2 Service men, the reporter was unable to record  
3 the first part of Vice President Humphrey's  
4 speech.)

5  
6 VICE PRESIDENT HUMPHREY: Somebody  
7 once asked me, "What was it at the University  
8 that made you feel that you ought to be  
9 involved in Civil Rights?"

10 And I said that the University  
11 didn't have anything to do with it, at all. I  
12 was so blamed hard up and broke that I didn't  
13 have time to think about Civil Rights. I had  
14 two jobs, I was married, and I had a baby, and  
15 I didn't have time to think about Civil Rights  
16 at that time.

17 I was thinking about whether I  
18 could stay in school, but I had a father and  
19 mother that brought me up to believe that there  
20 was a oneness of humanity, that people were  
21 people, and while everyone should have pride  
22 in their race, and their families and their  
23 culture, that there was, basically, a oneness  
24 of humanity, and I believe that that is why I  
25 have been a worker in this field of human



1 rights.

2 We have a whole body of Civil  
3 Rights laws. We have passed a lot of Civil  
4 Rights laws. Our problem is not for law; it is  
5 the application of law.

6 The second thing is the practice of  
7 human respect for the human being. I believe  
8 that the President can do an awful lot to set  
9 the example, just as the Mayor of the city can  
10 or the Governor of the state can. We are the  
11 people that mold public opinion, at least, we  
12 should be, and we can set the standards.

13 I think you people know here in this  
14 audience that I have worked diligently in my  
15 public life, in the Congress and as Vice  
16 President, to look forward to every aspect of  
17 human rights and Civil Rights. It doesn't do  
18 much good to say what I have said unless we can  
19 do something about the problems of deprivation,  
20 the alienation of people, and the bitterness  
21 that comes with being pushed aside.

22 Quite candidly, our young people  
23 today are not going to take it. And the answer  
24 to it is not to suppress them, but to try to  
25 find ways to work together. That simply means

1       that we have to get rid of the attitude of  
2       slummism--slummism is what I said--which is  
3       worse than a slum because a slum represents  
4       broken-down buildings. Slummism represents  
5       people that have been broken down, that become  
6       disparaged, unwanted, bitter and frustrated.  
7       We have to do something about it and we can.

8               The way to do something about it  
9       is to do what I want done for me. Somebody  
10      said, "What do you think we ought to do? Give  
11      the other guy the same conditions?"

12             I wasn't discriminated against  
13      because my name of Horatio, the middle name is  
14      that. That is bad enough to have that. They  
15      accepted that and the fellow that had the  
16      second name, Hubert, I said to him, "How would  
17      you like to have the first name?"

18             But I didn't have to face in a  
19      society that is essentially white the color  
20      discrimination. I know that.

21             So I think that not only should I  
22      see that the other fellow gets a chance as good  
23      as mine, but I think he ought to get a little  
24      better chance because he has had to wait so  
25      long.

1 I am going to talk now about equal  
2 opportunity, and I talk about it a great deal.  
3 Now, let's talk about it a little bit, and I am  
4 going to yield this floor.

5 Sometimes it is hard to--when you  
6 get along in our age--it is hard to change  
7 habits, but I think that whatever we do, that  
8 we should be thinking about young people, and  
9 that everything we do, when we plan a city,  
10 plan an industry, plan a program of industry,  
11 not necessarily to have it meet our needs, but--  
12 your age and my age--but how it is going to meet  
13 the needs of that child, that four-year-old,  
14 six-year-old, that ten-year-old. What kind of  
15 a life are they going to have?

16 And, therefore, when we say that  
17 we are going to give everybody an equal chance,  
18 because some people have had it unequal for so  
19 long--in other words, to make it equal, you  
20 have to be a little more than equal.

21 Let me give you an example. If a  
22 person is a victim of chronic malnutrition,  
23 that you have had no food or little or no food,  
24 and you are a victim of starvation, physical  
25 starvation, there isn't a doctor in the country



1       that is going to say, "Now, I eat hamburgers;  
2       let him eat hamburgers."

3               They put you in the hospital and  
4       say, "Look. We have to get this body up to  
5       where that body can consume the same food that  
6       I can."

7               In other words, until the balance  
8       is restored. That is what we have to do.  
9       This is why we need the best teachers where we  
10      have the most serious problems of education,  
11      and isn't it kind of ridiculous how we build  
12      things upsidedown in many areas of your country  
13      --and I speak, of course, without any reserva-  
14      tions, to a particular area. We have the oldest  
15      schools, the poorest schools in the poorest  
16      areas, where the need is the greatest, and we  
17      have the newest schools, the best schools in  
18      the area where the people are the wealthiest,  
19      where many of their children could be sent to  
20      private schools and where the need is the  
21      least.

22              It is just upsidedown.

23              Now, somebody is going to say,  
24      "Now, there he is and he is promising a lot of  
25      things and it is going to cost so terribly



1 much."

2 Let me tell you what it costs  
3 doing nothing. It costs a whole lot more to  
4 get sick than to get well. Crime, delinquency,  
5 wellfarism, unemployment, frustration,  
6 bitterness, these are the most expensive  
7 developments in human society, and we better  
8 start measuring and weighing and adding up  
9 those costs.

10 Job training doesn't cost nearly  
11 as much as keeping the family on welfare. A  
12 day care center--so there is a mother that  
13 wants to work and doesn't want to rely on just  
14 aid to dependent children--a day care center is  
15 a lot better for that mother than having  
16 welfare.

17 A health center in a neighborhood  
18 that can get some outpatient care and prenatal  
19 care and just general health care is a lot  
20 cheaper than disease and an increase in the rate  
21 of infant mortality and et cetera.

22 I have gone across the length and  
23 breadth of this country, pointing out what we  
24 face, and let me tell you it is a fact that the  
25 black boy doesn't have the same chance and you

1 and I know it. It is a fact that the mother in  
2 the black family runs the risk--the greater  
3 risk of ill health and of losing her baby than  
4 a white mother.

5 It is a fact, of course, that  
6 poverty knows no race, that there are more  
7 poor whites than there are poor blacks, but  
8 after having said that, all I can say is that  
9 we ought to have fewer of both and get on with  
10 the job.

11 We have made some wonderful  
12 beginnings and things have really happened in  
13 this country in the last ten years. Believe  
14 me, they have happened.

15 There is an old French philosopher  
16 whose name was called "Topeo." He said some-  
17 thing like this: "Those conditions of poverty  
18 which seem inevitable, which seemed intolerable,  
19 sometimes become inevitable; but once that you  
20 find that you can do something about things,  
21 then the conditions of poverty are intolerable  
22 and you have to do something about them."

23 In other words, when you see light  
24 at the end of the tunnel, you want to run  
25 faster to get there; but if you don't see any

1 light, what is the use of running? You may  
2 never get any place.

3 Hopelessness leads to despair and  
4 despair leads to living dead, and, by the way,  
5 there are many ways to kill a man. You can  
6 break his spirit and break his heart. You can  
7 deny him a chance to even be a man and he is,  
8 for all practical purposes, dead. And our job  
9 is to see that people live in this country.

10 This country started out with the  
11 proposition that there are certain God-given  
12 inalienable rights, and one of them is life,  
13 not just survival. There is a lot of difference  
14 between surviving and living. And those are  
15 inalienable rights of life and liberty and the  
16 pursuit of happiness; didn't say you had the  
17 right to happiness, but you have the right to  
18 pursue it.

19 That is why I have come to you. I  
20 know you are going to have many questions. I  
21 have been listening to some of the opposition  
22 here already, telling us all the mistakes we  
23 have made in the Poverty Program. But the  
24 greatest mistake is that we have let poverty  
25 linger with us so long and that is a terrible



1 mistake.

2 I read about how much it costs to  
3 train a young boy or young girl for the Job  
4 Corps, yet I don't read about how much it costs  
5 to let him stand on the street corner. We have  
6 taken thousands and thousands and you have  
7 taken thousands and thousands off the street  
8 corners and they have gotten jobs and they  
9 become self-sustaining citizens, and we have  
10 just scratched the surface.

11 I read about the mistakes that we  
12 made in the war and the money that has been  
13 wasted, and I suppose that is right, but I want  
14 to tell you something. Poverty has been with  
15 us longer than cancer and people have been  
16 trying to find a cure for cancer as long as  
17 modern medicine, but we don't go around  
18 condemning the doctors. We say give them a  
19 little more; let them seek new ways of trying  
20 to find the facts. We don't write them up as  
21 failures and boondockers. If somebody thinks  
22 he has found something that will work, and it  
23 may work on a few patients, we thank the Lord  
24 that it will.

25 The same is true with the war on



1 poverty. We are still searching. We are  
2 finding some things that do work. We find that  
3 you can do job training, but we find that it is  
4 hard to train the hard-core unemployed, a man  
5 that has never had a job, that has never known  
6 work discipline, that has never had experience,  
7 that has never been given a chance. You can't  
8 expect to give him a job and he will be a  
9 success. You have to condition him. You have  
10 to help him. You have to help him until he  
11 gains his sense of confidence, until he gains  
12 his self-respect. That is what it is all about.

13 I don't know all the reasons, but  
14 I will tell you what I do know. I will tell  
15 you that I think a country that can help put  
16 a man on the moon ought to be able to put a man  
17 on his feet.

18 VOICE FROM THE FLOOR: Mr. Vice  
19 President, my name is R. L. Hayes, and I am  
20 an elected representative of the poor, and most  
21 of the people you see here tonight, Mr. Vice  
22 President, represent the black middle class of  
23 this community. Very few of the poor are  
24 represented here.

25 I would appreciate it very much if

1       you would expound upon what you have said  
2       downstairs in regard to what you have said in  
3       regard to the poor and the young, and when the  
4       time comes in November to get out and work  
5       because we need the votes.

6               VICE PRESIDENT HUMPHREY: What I  
7       have tried to say--I didn't have any prepared  
8       remarks on that--but what I tried to say is that  
9       I needed in my campaign the idealism, the  
10      enthusiasm of the young, and I have associated  
11      my whole life with young people, with my office  
12      and in my work.

13             Might I just add that I have walked  
14      in as many ghettos as--maybe one other man has  
15      done more, and that is the late Senator Robert  
16      Kennedy--but I wanted to see not only that  
17      these young men and women had a chance to  
18      participate, but that I could receive their  
19      counsel at the door of the White House, their  
20      White House, not mine. It would be open to  
21      them, not only to their views, but to their  
22      advice.

23             You know, our young people are  
24      really well-informed young people. They are  
25      older young people, by the experiences of life,

1       than some of us were when we were very young.  
2       I have young people in my family and I know a  
3       little bit about that. They have had a better  
4       break than most kids have.

5               I want to see the poor have some  
6       decisions made about this Poverty Program. I  
7       would like to see the Model Cities Program  
8       include in its planning and in those that do  
9       the planning that the residents, where this  
10      Model Cities Program is to be applied, that they  
11      have something to say about that program before  
12      it is applied.

13             Now, let me tell you, I can tell  
14      you right now what people are going to say.  
15      Let's say that everything works out as I hope  
16      it will. There have been some mistakes made,  
17      but I want to tell you that some of the people  
18      that represent the rich louse it up, too, and  
19      it will be written up that they make mistakes,  
20      that their judgment was bad, that they didn't  
21      spend the money right.

22             Ladies and Gentlemen, everything  
23      requires experience, and when people have had  
24      no opportunity for decisionmaking, no opportunity  
25      for planning, no opportunity for making their



1 own decisions, they are going to make some  
2 mistakes. Most of us learn by making mistakes.

3 And I am prepared, as Vice  
4 President of this country, to publicly state  
5 that I know we will be making some mistakes,  
6 but I would rather make the mistakes of the  
7 mind, rather than the mistakes of the heart.  
8 We are going to have to take those chances.

9 I do know this: Unless we try,  
10 nothing is going to happen and I know we have  
11 rising expectations, just like is now going  
12 on in Africa and Asia.

13 VOICE FROM THE FLOOR: Downstairs,  
14 sir, you talked about the politics and contacts--  
15 (rest of question inaudible.)

16 VICE PRESIDENT HUMPHREY: I talked  
17 to them and I met with them and I never cared  
18 whether they liked me or not. As a matter of  
19 fact, some of those that like me the most tell  
20 me the least truth.

21 I sit down with groups of people,  
22 and I have frequently been told not to do it,  
23 that they are going to attack me, but I have  
24 been attacked so many times that it has almost  
25 become a pattern of life, and I think we must



1 be willing to listen, to let people know that  
2 we care and, as I said to many of the young  
3 men and women that I have met with, particularly  
4 in the black community, please don't doubt my  
5 sincerity. You may doubt my capacity, but don't  
6 doubt my sincerity.

7 When I talk about human betterment,  
8 I talk about it for everybody. I not only talk  
9 about it, I am willing to work for it.

10 VOICE FROM THE FLOOR: (Question  
11 inaudible.)

12 VICE PRESIDENT HUMPHREY: Well, it  
13 isn't the same with me, my friend.

14 The gentleman said that there has  
15 been a great deal of emphasis upon what is  
16 called law and order and he wondered why--and I  
17 think I paraphrase you right--why hadn't there  
18 been an equal emphasis on the justice where  
19 black folks are concerned and where white folks  
20 are, too.

21 I have made that emphasis. I  
22 addressed the National Press Club in Washington  
23 under the subject of Civil Order and Civil  
24 Justice, one and inseparable. I spoke to  
25 several thousand middle-income, higher-income,

1 and professional and blue-collar workers today  
2 in California, and I spoke to them of the  
3 just society, the elimination of the inequity,  
4 the spreading crime, and the festering grounds  
5 of violence.

6 I happen to believe that housing  
7 codes are to be enforced just like other codes  
8 of law. I believe in law and order. I believe  
9 that violence is not going to solve our  
10 problems, but I also believe that the same  
11 public official that took the responsibility to  
12 enforce the law, also took the responsibility  
13 to see that the laws are just and that  
14 inequities shall be removed.

15 I have many ideas about law and  
16 order. The improvement of our police depart-  
17 ments--when I was Mayor of our city, the first  
18 thing that I did was to send the officers to  
19 training school in the field of race relations.  
20 I had law and order in my community, but I did  
21 not want the City of Minneapolis to be known  
22 for its police department alone, but for its  
23 human relations.

24 We had the first war on poverty,  
25 if you will permit me to brag a little bit. I

1 was a young man. I was thirty-three years of  
2 age, Mayor of the city, unafraid, and I looked  
3 at the welfare rolls and I said, "Many of these  
4 people on these rolls that can't work should  
5 have better incomes and better protection, and  
6 those that can should have jobs."

7 And this was 1947 and we started  
8 a program of vocational rehabilitation to our  
9 training schools, to our institutions, to our  
10 employment services, to our Chambers of  
11 Commerce, to our churches, and we were able to  
12 remove from the welfare rolls to productive,  
13 well-paid jobs at good incomes double or treble  
14 what they got on relief, over eighty per cent  
15 of the welfare clients of my city, and the  
16 others got better care.

17 I happen to believe in compassion,  
18 but I believe that what most people want is a  
19 chance. I think most people would like a  
20 chance to earn their way and those that can't  
21 would like to have some semblance of dignity,  
22 which I am going to see that they get.

23 And your question is appropriate  
24 and I believe in law and order and I believe  
25 in social justice, and if I am President of



1 the United States, you will get both.

2 VOICE FROM THE FLOOR: (Question  
3 inaudible.)

4 VICE PRESIDENT HUMPHREY: Your  
5 question is right to the point. I want you to  
6 know what kind of fellow you are going to get.

7 I have never believed in a riot.  
8 I don't think it helps anybody. I am going to  
9 start right now with that.

10 I think there are many ways of riot  
11 control. We don't need police brutality. In  
12 many ways we have learned, particularly through  
13 leadership within the ghetto itself, as you call  
14 it, by the people that have the respect.

15 Now, I am not one of those kind of  
16 persons that says just because a man or a group  
17 stirs up trouble, that the way we will handle  
18 him is to punish him by no programs of social  
19 justice or social advance. Just as I said, you  
20 cannot condone the violence; just as we can't  
21 condone that, even though the violence may take  
22 place, but that we proceed with these programs  
23 of housing and jobs. You don't want me to go  
24 around and pamper you. You want me to respect  
25 you as a man. We can have both. We can have



1           that respect and we can argue it out man to man,  
2           disagree as American citizens in the peaceful  
3           processes of this democracy, which sometimes  
4           gets a little rugged, and then we can go ahead  
5           and start the developing programs.

6                     But what I am going to need is your  
7           help. Let's assume that the blessing that we  
8           all pray for comes, that this war is over and  
9           that we can devote the resources that we use  
10          in this struggle for social purposes.

11                    As I said downstairs, unless we  
12          get out and do our job of winning the public,  
13          that those peace dividends will never go to the  
14          ghettos and never go to the war. They will  
15          come in tax reductions. But I know that if we  
16          are going to have prosperity in this country,  
17          we are--I was in the Congress after Korea and  
18          I remember it and we didn't get one social  
19          welfare program with all the savings of peace,  
20          and I don't know where it went, but it sure  
21          didn't go to the poor. We didn't have any  
22          federal aid to education; we didn't have any  
23          war on poverty; we didn't have any model  
24          cities; we didn't have any Medicare.

25                    I don't know what happened to all

1 of it, but I know that the people who were  
2 looking for the changes that they had waited  
3 a hundred years for never got it. I can tell  
4 you that even with the war, more has been done  
5 in the last five and six years than any  
6 comparable period in history, and give us  
7 peace and give yourself a man in the White  
8 House who cares deeply how you live and give us  
9 a chance and we will do something with this  
10 country that is worthwhile.

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