

REMARKS OF
VICE PRESIDENT HUBERT H. HUMPHREY
BEFORE COPE

Carpenter's Hall
St. Louis, Missouri
Tuesday, October 15, 1968

Thank you very much. Thank you very much, Brother Ehrhardt, and our good state president, Brother John Rollings.

VOICE: Tell them like it is, Hubie.

VICE PRESIDENT HUMPHREY: It isn't every candidate for President that can address a member of the labor movement as brother, but I can.

(Applause)

Well, you have got the spirit tonight, there is no doubt about that.

VOICE: You are in Give 'em Hell territory. Give it to them.

VICE PRESIDENT HUMPHREY: You know what President Truman said when someone asked him, they said why is it you always say -- why is it they always say about you give them hell, Harry. He said, look, I never give them hell. All I do is just tell them the truth and it just seems like hell for some of them.

(Laughter and applause)

I want to get right down to cases with you. We have another dinner, as you know, that we are to attend tonight but I surely wanted to come to this one and I want to take just a few minutes of maybe reminiscing and then we are going to get out the shillallah.

Laughter)

And take on a couple of fellows at the same time.

Now, let's just, let's just sort of reminisce for a moment. I started my political life with an endorsement by the Minneapolis Central Labor Union when I first ran for Mayor of the City of Minneapolis. I have never been in a political campaign at any time in my life that I did not have the full endorsement of the American Federation of Labor and CIO and other organizations of labor in my home state. I was once a member of the AFT. I am happy to say that I hold honorary memberships in several good unions. It is the best kind of membership to hold, you know. You don't have to pay any dues and you get all the benefits.

(Applause)

I addressed more labor conventions than most people have attended but my life has been tied in with your life. And I have said publicly many times, and I want to say it here, I have never been asked by the labor movement in all of my service as Mayor, as United States Senator, and as Vice President, to do anything that could not be printed on the front page of a newspaper or to do anything that was not in the public interest, and I am proud of the labor movement for that record.

(Applause)

I haven't had my friends in the labor movement come to me and say, would you write a letter to the stockbrokers and tell them to take -- let them know that the Securities and Exchange Commission is being too hard on them. You know, only recently one of the candidates for the highest office in the gift of this land --- you know that regulatory agencies of this government are supposed to be removed from Presidential pressure and while he still thinks he is going to be President and he is playing President, I want him to know that that letter will have no effect whatsoever, that the President of the United States is not merely elected to help stockbrokers, he is elected to represent the interest of the stockowners and the people of this country.

(Applause)

Now, some of you may say what is this fellow talking about tonight? Well, let me tell you what I am talking about. Only recently the Republican nominee sent a letter out to two or three thousand selected people telling them that he thought that the Securities and Exchange Commission, which was set up under the New Deal to protect people who were buying stocks in the stock market, to protect them from fraudulent operations, he sent a letter out saying that he wanted them to know, that is, these brokers, that he thought the Securities and Exchange Commission was being unfair, but he didn't send a letter to a single owner of a mutual fund, and some of you right in this audience own shares in little mutual funds, he didn't send a letter to you saying that you ought to be protected. Not on your life. And ladies and gentlemen, that tells a lot about this campaign.

Tonight I was informed that the Republican nominee plans on taking four hours on national television on Saturday before the election, I believe it is Saturday before the election, at least a day or two before the election, four hours -- I would hate to tell you what that bill is. Let me tell you something, it runs into the hundreds of thousands, up into the millions of dollars. And he is going to monopolize those airwaves and that will be more television time than we will have in this entire campaign, and he will be spending more money on that particular one day exercise than I have had to spend in all of my media campaign, thus far in this campaign, but I don't care if he takes ten hours. I would like to give him 24. Maybe he will finally say something on what is going on in this country.

(Applause) (Whistles)

This country deserves better. Here we are, three men, competing for the highest office within the gift of the American people.

VOICES: Two men.

VOICE: One man.

VICE PRESIDENT HUMPHREY: That is better.

(Applause)

I wish it were that way but I know better and I know that there are three, and I know that when we compete for this job, this great responsibility, and this high honor, that you have right to expect the best out of us that we have in us. You have a right to know what we think. You have a right to hear us cross examine each other. You have a right to hear us speak from the same platform at the same time under the same circumstances on the same issues before the same audience on the same network before the same press under the same circumstances. And that is what I have been asking for, and what happens? What happens? The Republican nominee --

VOICE: Chicken.

(Laughter and applause)

VICE PRESIDENT HUMPHREY: The Republican nominee says that is kid stuff.

I want to tell you something, ladies and gentlemen. The American people are entitled to better things than that. You are entitled to know, mother, what this man and what Hubert Humphrey and what the third party candidate has in mind for you and your family. You are entitled to know what we think about issues such as Vietnam and the arms race, the treaty to prevent the spread of nuclear weapons, Social Security, Medicare.

What do we think about the labor movement? What do we think about right to work laws? What do we think about a hundred and one things? You are entitled to know. And you ought to have the privilege of seeing us cross examine each other and let the truth come out or let the other fellow be exposed for what his position is.

People hold different positions. We don't all agree in this country. But one candidate above all others in this campaign has

decided that he can get by on generalities. Every time any issue comes up he says, I can't talk about that because there is a moratorium on that discussion.

The next one comes up and he says I can't talk about that because there are negotiations under way.

The next one comes up and he says I can't talk about that because that is highly sensitive.

Well, ladies and gentlemen, I want to tell you something, if you have got a man that wants to be President that can't talk to you when he wants to be President, let me tell you he will have nothing to say to you after he is President.

(Applause and whistles)

There are two Congressmen here tonight -- one Congresswoman and one Congressman and me. And I want to tell you that they are wonderful people.

(Applause)

You just will never have anybody better, that has done a better job for you in this Congress, that House of Representatives, than Leonor Sullivan right over here.

(Applause)

And you folks out there in St. Louis County, you have got the chance of your life now in Jimmy Symington.

(Applause)

He is the great son of a great father and a great mother and what a great family, and I am proud to call them all friends, every one of them. Great people, those Symingtons.

(Applause)

You know, I know why the Republican nominee is hiding out. I know why. Because he doesn't want to answer some of the questions that I want to put to him. I don't want to give you all the speech that I have in mind for a half dozen occasions but let me tell you this, why he doesn't want to talk. I know why he doesn't want to appear. He doesn't want me to put it to him why when he had a chance to help somebody get a college education, somebody to get some help in school, when we had a chance early in the fifties to get some aid to education, when schools were operating at half time, when you couldn't find teachers, when you knew that you had children in classrooms that were overcrowded, he doesn't want me to put it to him and say, listen, Mr. Nixon, while you were Vice President, why did you vote no on a tie vote on Federal Aid to Education? I know he doesn't want me to ask him but I am asking him.

(Applause)

Let me tell you this country is better off because your Federal Government has seen fit to pour billions of dollars now into our schools. 54 per cent of the American families today have a son or a daughter in college and many of them are the sons and daughters of workers. In ten years, 80 percent of the American families will have a son or daughter in college, and I will tell you why, because the Democratic Administration cared, because we put money into schools, because we provided scholarships, because we provided loans, because we know that an education is the best investment that a person or a nation can make, and we are going to continue to do it.

(Applause)

And Mr. Nixon doesn't want me to ask him why he wasn't for increased benefits in Social Security at the same time we were voting increased benefits for Senators. He doesn't want me to ask him why he said that Medicare wouldn't work and why he spent a lifetime trying to stop it. He doesn't want me to remind him that I introduced the first bill in Congress on Medicare in 1949 when he was opposed to it.

(Applause)

He doesn't want me to ask him what is your public record, Mr. Nixon? What bill did you ever pass? What bill has your name on it? What legislation did you contribute to for the good of this country?

VOICE: Taft-Hartley.

(Laughter)

VICE PRESIDENT HUMPHREY: You bet. You bet.

He doesn't want to stand before an audience like this or any other audience and have me say to him, listen, how do you stand in the rankings that labor gives, not only on labor bills but on all the great legislation, on health and consumer and education and all of the legislation that affects the people's interest, and, ladies and gentlemen, I will let anybody take a look at my record and let them take a look at his and then vote.

(Applause)

Ladies and gentlemen, I don't intend if I can help it -- and I need your help; this is not just my fight and you know it. You know that if the Republican nominee wins this election that you have no friend in the White House and you know it. He said he is going to report -- he is going to appoint some Democrats, he said, to the Cabinet. I tell you I know what kind of Democrats those will be.

(Applause)

We have got a few like that. We have got a few like that.

VOICE: Dixiecrats.

VICE PRESIDENT HUMPHREY: I will tell you, they will be great. They will be ones that convert him like Strom Thurmond.

VOICE: How about Maddox?

VICE PRESIDENT HUMPHREY: He can have him, too.

(Laughter and applause)

I tried to save his wobbling political soul but he wasn't savable.

(Laughter)

Now, let me tell you, my friends, again, it is not my fight alone. It is yours. I am the standard bearer for a political party, for the Democratic Party, but I don't need to tell you I was back here in St. Louis in 1956, 1958, 1960. I see a lot of workers here that have jobs that are better jobs now than they had then and I think I recall a few things that were going on.

Mr. Nixon says that he wants to have more of the same. That is what he said. He said, I want to bring you back more of the same of what we had. Good God.

(Laughter)

What did you have? Seven per cent unemployment. Three recessions. Any working family that can go for that, well, all I can say is, mother, housewife, if your husband is voting that way, you had better have a talk with him. Talk hard to him.

VOICE: Get a new husband.

(Laughter)

VICE PRESIDENT HUMPHREY: No. I will not advocate that.

(Laughter)

But I am advocating that you take stern measures.

(Laughter and applause)

You have to admit we Democrats have more fun than that other crowd, anyhow.

Now, let me talk to you about the otherend, and this is the one that I want to talk to you about because this is the serious part of this election. If this was a two-party election, I wouldn't have any worries about how it was going to come out because I do not believe that the people that rejected Richard Nixon in 1960, a state that rejected him in 1962, that the people of the United States would accept him in 1968. I just don't believe that.

But this election is not a regular election or a normal election nor are the times normal, and you and I know it, and as much as some people want to gloss over it, the facts are here and they are hard to look at.

The facts are that the third party candidate is making serious inroads in and out of the labor movement, in and out of north and south. Some months back they said, well, all he will do is get some

votes in the south, and a lot of my fellow Democrats comforted themselves with that and said, well, that will hurt Nixon.

Now, the fact is that that isn't all that is happening. He has been burrowing in up north and on the border states and he has been getting by because no one, with one or two exceptions, and I am one of them, have been exposing him, and the labor movement has been doing it. "Don't let George do to the United States what George did to Alabama"; and that is put out by the St. Louis Labor Council and this little pamphlet ought to be in every worker's home in America, and ought to be read five times a day.

(Applause and whistles)

And this pamphlet tells the facts. I don't need to go over them in detail. I will just simply tell you this, that every mother and father in this room ought to know that his state under his leadership, and there are wonderful people in Alabama just as there are in Missouri, black and white, and remember that his state under his leadership had the second lowest per capita expenditure for education of any state of the Union, and it wasn't that he just denied a black boy or girl a school. He denied a white one, too.

You know what he is getting by with? He is getting by around this country pretending that, oh, well, this fellow Humphrey wants to go too fast. He wants to do everything for the black man. He doesn't care anything about the blue collar worker and the white man.

Well, I have been a blue collar worker and I am white and I care about myself and I care about blacks and whites and George Wallace doesn't. That is the difference.

(Applause and whistles)

Listen to what this pamphlet says. Alabama wages in 1967 placed that state in 48th place, only two from the bottom of the nation. Alabama earnings last year were 32 per cent lower than the average for all the United States. Income per person in the United States was \$3,137 but in Alabama it was \$2,166, \$971 less than the national average. High consumer taxes. The most regressive, the most unfair tax program in the world is the sales tax. And every housewife in this audience knows that Alabama has the highest sales tax in the nation, six percent. Six per cent.

Yes, my friends. And this man parades in the labor movement as a friend of the worker and some people fall for it.

What is his economic program? What assurance do you have you won't have unemployment? The lowest workmen's compensation in America. And how does he get by with it? What is he doing in the labor movement? I will tell you what he is doing. He is going around and he has got a lot of white workers saying, you know that this fellow Humphrey, he goes around trying to get a Negro a job and when he does, it threatens your job.

That is a lot of hogwash. What I am trying to do is have an economy in this America that will permit every white man and every black man that wants to work to have a job.

(Applause and whistles)

Let me say to you, my friends, there are cities to be rebuilt and we are going to do it. There are schools that need to be built and we are going to build them. There are roads that need to be built and we are going to build them. There aren't enough workers to do these jobs today.

We are building a bitter America and we are building a better America and we need every American and we need them black or white, brown, yellow, or red, we need them no matter who they are. If they are an American citizen and they have a job, they have a willingness to work, I want you to know what my program is. I don't look at the color of their skin. I look at their ability and their willingness to work and if they are willing, they will go to work.

(Applause)

Now, let me give you a simple example. Some of us have pretty good sized families. When you have three kids in the family and you are having supper -- do you call it supper here or dinner?

VOICE: Supper.

VICE PRESIDENT HUMPHREY: We call it --

VOICE: Eatin'time.

VICE PRESIDENT HUMPHREY: Well, eatin' time, all right.

(Laughter)

You have three kids in the family and ma makes a pie and you cut that pie and you've got a friend that comes in, so you have got six pieces out of the pie.

You've got a lovely home, you are young and you are healthy and you are making good money and you have got six kids in the family.

Now, if you use the same size pie tin, somebody is either going to go without pie or the pieces are going to get smaller.

You know what Humphrey's program is? Get a bigger pie tin.

(Applause)

And it is just that way. Build a bigger country.

We are going to have a trillion dollar economy in this country in four more years, a trillion dollars. You say, I can't believe it. Well, let me tell you, we have today almost a \$900 billion economy. A trillion dollar economy.

Now, that means more income, more jobs. That means more work, more investment, and we are going to need people as we never needed them before.

Ladies and gentlemen, some of the best people that we find are people who came from the poorest families because some of those people understand what it really means to need a job and to want one and to work. And we are going to train workers.

This fellow Nixon went out the other day and said, you know what that Humphrey wants to do? He wants to spend more money on education, all these silly programs. He wants to spend more money on this war on poverty. He wants to spend more money on all of these training programs and education.

He is right. I do.

I will tell you something, when we spend, it will come back a hundredfold. Every time a man gets a job and we help him get it, every time a person is trained, black or white, and we help train him, no matter how much it costs, we will get it back. Did you ever hear of withholding?

(Laughter and applause)

Oh, bosh, I have got to go. Listen, I have got to tell you one other thing. You know, I will tell you a story that actually happened out in Loyola University in New Orleans. There was a woman there that has been on relief. She had never gotten off relief. There was no man in the home. She was black. She had children. She was messed up, as we say. But she got into a training program and they trained her at long last to become a secretary and today that woman has a job in a medical publishing house. That is a true story. And when she got her job -- by the way, the state and the city had spent thousands of dollars taking care of the family on relief, and they only spent a few hundred dollars training her and I can tell her Nixon and Wallace saying that is too much money we are spending. Of course, they also say we ought to cut back on relief. They just want to cut back on people. That is really what they want to cut back on.

But anyway, this woman got a job and she came in with the first pay check after the second week -- she had her check, and she came to her instructor and she said to her instructor, she said, look, I have the first check that I ever earned and it has my name on it. For the first time I have a check with my name on it and I earned it. She said, I am the happiest woman in the world. And her instructor said, well, you make me very happy because it means

that we have done something here, something good.

The second week she came -- the next pay check comes and she comes back and she says, oh, she says, I have another check but, she says, there is a little stub on the side of it and they have all kinds of little numbers on there. And it has SS. What does that mean?

He says, oh, that is Social Security. And then it says, WH. What does that mean? That is withholding. And she said, oh, what does that mean? He said, well those are taxes, dear. And she said, you mean I am paying taxes? And he said, yes, you are. Every two weeks the Government takes out a certain amount of that check for taxes and then there is a little taken out for your union dues and there is a little taken out for this and that and they kind of listed out all the things that had been taken out.

She says, oh, I am so happy. She says, you know, I have never paid taxes in my life. She said, I feel like a real citizen.

Two weeks later she came back. She had the check and she came in and she was kind of angry and she was waving that check at the instructor. She says, I want you to take a look at this. Look at all the taxes that Government is charging me.

(Laughter and applause)

Ladies and gentlemen, ladies and gentlemen, that is rehabilitation.

(Laughter and applause)

That is what we are talking about.

So, I wanted to talk to you tonight about what is the gossip, and I know what the gossip is. The gossip is, and it is being put out in the ranks of labor, amongst people that have mortgages, people that have suffered unemployment, people that have every reason to be concerned, the gossip is that this fellow Humphrey, he is not really concerned about me, a blue collar worker. He is concerned about somebody else.

I want you to know, my dear friends, the best way for me to be concerned about you, you, you and you, is to be concerned about this man, and that man and somebody else. When we are concerned about each other, when we are concerned about full employment, when we are concerned about expanding America, when we are concerned about a prosperous America, when we are concerned about jobs for everybody, you don't have to worry about race and you don't have to worry about whether you are going to lose your job. There is going to be enough for everybody.

(Applause and whistles)

So, don't listen, don't listen to this counterfeit argument. The candidacy of George Wallace is based on a platform that is as phony as a Confederate \$3 bill and make no mistake about it.

(Applause)

The last thing I want to tell you about, he says he is the candidate of law and order. That is the biggest bunch of hocus that I have ever heard in my life. Law and order. A man who picks which courts he is going to abide -- that he is going to abide by, which laws he is going to live by, which judges he is going to respect. You try it sometime. You just try to pick which ones you are going to like and see what happens to you.

(Laughter)

A man that defies the highest law of the land and says he is a law abiding citizen. You try it sometime. And he says that is law and order.

And, ladies and gentlemen, let me tell you something. If he is going to have the kind of law and order for America that he had for Alabama, then may I say that God Bless America is no longer a song, it ought to be a prayer.

(Applause)

The number one murder rate in the nation, and he talks about law and order. The number 2 aggravated assault rate in the nation in

his state under his governorship, and he talks about law and order. A man that defies the courts, a man that vilifies judges, a man that decides which laws he will obey and which ones he won't, a man that says if somebody lies down in front of my car I will run over him.

What kind of a man is that? And he is supposed to be President?

President of what?

VOICE: President of --

VICE PRESIDENT HUMPHREY: I will tell you, my friends, not President of the United States. America needs a President that cares about its people, that cares about this country. America needs a President that will see to it that we can trust each other, not hate each other, that we can live together as a family, not as enemies.

I served as the mayor of a city. All these other candidates run around talking about law and order. There has never been a one of them that ever gave any money(?) any of it.

I ran a police department. I had the responsibility for law and order in a city of a half million people. And I had the support of labor. And I got my city law and order and I broke up organized crime, drove the racketeers out and gave the people clean government and the labor movement helped me and the nation knows it, and I submit neither candidate of the other party can say that and say it honestly.

(Applause and whistles)

I have got to go. I have got to go on over and get one of those units like Jimmy Symington.

Listen here. Listen. I told you it is your fight, your Social Security you are talking about, not just mine. I have got a pretty good one all fixed up by 16 years. The Senate does better by us than they do by you. It is not my Medicare right now. I have got a drugstore. I can still get pills cheaply.

(Applause and laughter)

VOICE: Got your dues paid up?

VICE PRESIDENT HUMPHREY: I don't know about that but I say I believe one thing that we can assure Tom Curtis and Richard Nixon is generous unemployment compensation benefits.

(Applause)

I want you to go out of this hall tonight believing two things, that this fight first of all, is our fight and secondly, that we can win it, and we must win it. We cannot afford to have this country go backwards economically or socially. We can't afford to live in distrust, suspicion, hatred and bitterness, and we can't afford economic recessions.

What we need in this country is a sense of community, trust of one another, belief in one another, and what else do we need? Every dream we have depends on America staying strong, staying prosperous. Imagine what a recession or a depression would do to us today. And I want you to go out now and help me. But more importantly, I want you to help yourself. It will be your job that is lost, it will be your family that suffers and mine, it will be our country that pays the terrible price of division and bitterness and racism.

We have got a job to do. Sure, Mr. Nixon leads in the polls. I read it every day. And there are people that tell me we can't win. Well, I have got news for them. We are going to win.

Thank you.

(Applause)

#

910-761-0411
adm. office

SPECIAL STATEMENT TO THE PEOPLE OF ST. LOUIS

Our society relies on individual initiative and involvement to make things work--economically, politically and socially.

We expect every individual to do his best--but we all have a responsibility to help him make that best better. We expect every man ~~xxx~~ who is able, to hold a job, but it is up to us to make sure that ~~a~~ job ^{will be} available. We expect him to work hard, but it is up to us to see that he has the skills and the training that will make his work affective.

~~Working~~ Together, the federal government, your state and local government and your private industries have made St. Louis a city of new employment opportunities.

---A Human Resources Development pilot program has referred over 9,000 ~~x~~ unemployed to new jobs.

---Working with the Department of Labor, such industries as McDonnell Douglas Corporation and Mallinckrodt Chemical Works are training former hard-core disadvantaged for jobs which will put them well above the poverty level.

---A Neighborhood Youth Corps program provides both education and on-the-job training for highschool dropouts ~~xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx~~ ~~xxxxx~~ changing these young people from ~~xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx~~ dependency to self-reliance.

---Private citizens are serving as volunteer tutors to enable ~~xx~~ adults whose job potential is limited by lack of education to pass high-school equivalency tests.

and the people of St. Louis have

This administration ~~has~~ ^{done} a great deal to provide jobs and skills to the unemployed, the hopeless, the frustrated. ~~The people of St. Louis have done a great deal--~~ but you and I know that much more ^{needs} to be done. ~~xxxxxxxxxxxx~~

which will

I have made a series of proposals ~~to~~ ^{to} bridge this gap.

First, tax incentives for industries willing to locate in the inner city ~~xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx~~ to hire and train the unemployed.

~~Second education programs must be made more relevant to the needs of individual students, with a tripling of federal support for vocational and ~~xxx~~ technical training.~~

Second, a ~~whole new~~ major new program of tax-sharing which will give local governments access to ~~federal~~ the rising federal income and permit them to fill their own priorities for education, renewal and training.

Third, a tripling of federal support for vocational and technical education programs and a general expansion of federal aid to education in order that our schools may be more relevant to the individual needs of all their students.

Fourth, An Adult Opportunity Act to ~~permit expand~~ ~~opportunities for basic education~~ provide the knowledge that will remove education barriers now before those who have no high school diplomas, and to provide advanced training opportunities beyond high schools.

~~With knowledge~~, we ^{can create} ~~can~~ ~~have~~ skilled workers and citizens newly independent of welfare. I am ready to make the commitment that will make this possible.



Minnesota Historical Society

Copyright in this digital version belongs to the Minnesota Historical Society and its content may not be copied without the copyright holder's express written permission. Users may print, download, link to, or email content, however, for individual use.

To request permission for commercial or educational use, please contact the Minnesota Historical Society.



www.mnhs.org