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WALTER BURKE TESTIMONIAL DINNER FEBRUARY 12, 1969 MILWAUKEE. WISCONSIN am happy to be here to testify -- I use the term because this is a testimonial dinner -- for Walter Burke. I am not sure what kind of a witness I am supposed to be but I can qualify on several scores. In the first place I can testify that he is a splendid politician and I think I know something about politics. Any man who can celebrate his victory in an election before the votes are counted obviously knows the name of the game. eady to Acapt the Lard - Renumbeth Du

So, Walter, let me be among the first to congratulate you on your victory in yesterday's election.

You demonstrated the value of solid labor support.

In the second place, I can testify that Walter Burke has had a profound influence on presidential elections in the United States. After all, he was one of my staunch supporters back in the spring of 1960 when John F. Kennedy and I campaigned in this state in the presidential primaries that year.

Between Walter and myself we gave John Kennedy a pretty good start in that 1960 presidential campaign.

I then finished the job in West Virginia.

In the third place, I can testify that Walter Burke is a trouble-maker.

In 1937 he was fired for his union activities and it took the National Labor Relations Board -- which had only just been found legal by the Supreme Court -- to get him his job back.

and those immigrants, Philip Murray and Joe Molony,
who helped make the United Steelworkers the kind of
organization it is today -- one of the largest and most
respected unions in the world.

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There is a fourth area I would like to comment on.

In the years that I have held public office I must tell you that the labor movement which is led by people like Walter Burke and I.W. Abel and George Meany never once asked me to do anything or vote for or against any measure which they

did not genuinely believe was in the public interest.

The labor movement in the United States today is,

believe, a genuine ''people's lobby.'' The measures

they support and I'm trank to tell you we wouldn't

have medicare in the United States today if it hadn't been

for the support they give me in that fight ... are measures

for the benefit of all people, not just the members of

their organizations.

The American labor movement has been in the forefront of the struggle to achieve racial justice in this country.

Last week in Washington the Leadership Conference
on Civil Rights celebrated its 20th anniversary -- two
decades of relentless effort in Congress and in the
executive departments to build a legal structure which
recognizes only one citizenship.

money

In these years we have turned this country around from a time when law and government supported segregation and discrimination to a time when law and government oppose segregation and discrimination.

Organized labor has been a driving force of the Leadership Conference since its inception in 1949. Indeed, Andy Biemiller of Milwaukee -- my collaborator in pushing the minority civil rights plank at the Philadelphia Democratic Convention of 1948 and today head of the AFL-C10 Legislative Division -- presented a special award to Roy Wilkins at the Leadership Conference dinner.

Today we are faced with the direct challenge of using this framework of law to achieve real justice in the daily

dissigned to free Emanciable
millions toom the bondage
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To the extent we push forward now, with visible progress in rebuilding our neighborhoods, rescuing our schools, providing gainful employment and a decent place to live for every American to the extent justice becomes a reality in peoples' lives, as well as a legal fact -- we will silence and defeat those who appeal only to hate, bigotry and violence.

We need not -- and must not -- underestimate the tremendous resources which this nation can bring to the unfinished agenda of human rights.

We must fight hard for justice. We must demand
the public and private resources necessary for true equality
of life. But we must do so without giving way to hate -- without
breaking the bonds of community -- without destroying
those whom we must oppose.

And I know that American labor -- led by men

like Walter Burke and the United Steelworkers of America -will again be found at the forefront of this struggle.

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We need more trouble-makers like Walter Burke - the kind that get their hair out.

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... are measures for the benefit of all people, not just the members
of their organizations.

And the measures and actions they oppose are things that they believe will be harmful to the general public, not just the members of their organizations.

That's not something you can say about most of the lobbies that operate in Washington today.

It's people like Walter Burke and the men associated with him in the Steelworkers and in the American labor movement that give it that character... and we need more of them.

We need them in the labor movement and we need them in the Democratic party. George Meany and Abe and Walter can take care of the labor movement. I intend to see that we get more of their kind of people working with us in the Democratic party.

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