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FOR FURTHER INFORMATION: Caryl Conner
(202) 638-4508

REMARKS

THE HONORABLE HUBERT H. HUMPHREY

O'HARA COMMISSION HEARING

MINNEAPOLIS, MINNESOTA

JANUARY 15, 1970

The Democratic party has undertaken the never-easy task of self-examination, and I want to talk for just a few minutes about what we are doing to reform and up date ourselves, what we are doing to make ourselves, if you will excuse one more use of that overworked word - relevant.

Political parties are essential elements in the American political structure. As my friend Clinton Rossiter said: "No America without democracy, no democracy without politics, no politics without party."

I wish that I could include the Republican party in this examination of political reform but, to be candid, the impulse to reform -- never strong in the Republican party -- seems particularly quiescent at the moment. The Republican approach to reform reminds me of George Bernard Shaw's attitude toward exercise -- whenever he felt the urge to take some, he lay down until he got over it.

Democrats are in the midst of a thorough review of all our past ways of doing things -- all the way from the precinct level to the national convention, from voter registration to presidential nomination.

The process began over five years ago when the 1964 convention acted to ban racial discrimination in the selection of delegates. In 1968, our Convention took further steps forward. It seated the Mississippi "challengers" and unseated the "regulars." It did away with the long-established unit rule, allowing each delegate to vote his or her own conscience. And it resolved that all delegates to future Conventions be selected through a process "in which all Democratic voters have had full, meaningful and timely opportunity to participate."

But we are here today because the Convention took an additional step into the future -- it mandated a re-examination of the Convention itself.

Adopting a platform and nominating national candidates is the crucial business of a political party. Today, because of electronic communication, an audience of undreamed of proportion watches us perform the decision making process, and our excesses or our follies will be exposed as never before.

The television audience will decide for itself the important questions -- are we rational, are we fair, are all views considered,

are all voices given hearing and due consideration -- in other words, does the Democratic Party conduct its business in a democratic manner?

Can a thoughtful political platform be hammered out in a few days in the hectic convention atmosphere? Can rational decision be reached amid the circus atmosphere, the parading and the balloons? Should rituals, songs and demonstrations be eliminated? Should presidential candidates address the convention before the balloting?

Indeed, should the convention itself be eliminated and another method of candidate selection instituted?

This Commission is charged with the examination of these and other questions relating to the rules and procedures of the Convention.

As your first witness, I want to urge you to full and thorough examination of these questions, but let there be no mistake about my preferences: I am no believer in tradition for its own sake -- as most of you know, I have recommended the elimination of the electoral college and the selection of the President and Vice President by direct popular vote. But I do believe that national conventions have an important -- indeed, an essential -- role in our political system and should remain part of it.

This is a big country, with many kinds of people, all with diverse interests. In the Democratic Party (more than in the Republican) this national diversity is fully reflected. Thus it is essential that we get together from time to time to determine where we agree and where we differ -- and to hammer out the differences in full and free discussion with concern and respect for the opinions of others -- so that we can move forward together.

I have spent enough years actively engaged in the work of this Party to know with great certainty that regardless of the divergent views that may exist prior to the convention, regardless of differences among the various delegations about who is the best candidate; if all views are fully aired, if all the advocates have a chance to be heard and all opinions considered, if all the rules which we adopt assure that fair play is afforded to the contestants and their respective contentions, then after the debate has ended, we will leave the convention city as a united party, and, hence, a victorious party. As we all know too well, we do know how to fight among ourselves. But it is truly a family fight, and, like families, we also know how to kiss and make up. In my view, the role of this Commission is to see to it that every family member gets his or her chance to be heard, to assure that his or her views are given every consideration.

It is my conviction that the work of this Commission is critical to the future welfare of the Party.

Whether we reenlist the enthusiasm and strength of alienated youth, whether we continue our salutary alliances with all groups of forward looking Americans, whether we successfully withstand the continued assaults upon our long-range goals and aspirations for the Nation (mounted by the present Administration) depends to a great extent on the outcome of these deliberations.

This Commission is compelling evidence of our Party's determination to continue to be the party of the people, to keep its sights firmly fixed on substance, rather than pomp and pageantry.

I say this bodes well for the future of the Democratic Party.

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(congo'Hara)

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NOTES: O'HARA COMMISSION, JANUARY 15, 1970

1. WELCOME to Minneapolis -- pleased to host first regional meeting of this Commission, to welcome the O'Hara Commission, with its vital and necessary task, to my state, etc.

2. BACKGROUND:

A. WHY REFORM?

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B. HISTORY.

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*McGovern
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Convention itself. *its form, its procedures, its rules.*

C. THE QUESTIONS.

Adopting a platform and nominating national candidates is the crucial business of a political party. Today, because of electronic communication, an audience of undreamed of proportion watches us perform the decision making process, and our excesses or our follies will be exposed as never before.

The television audience will decide for itself the important questions -- are we rational, are we fair, are all views considered, are all voices given hearing and due consideration -- in other words, does the Democratic Party conduct its business in a democratic manner? -- *decent respect for opinions of others*

Can a thoughtful political platform be hammered out in a few days in the hectic convention atmosphere? Can rational decision be reached amid the circus atmosphere, the parading and the balloons? Should rituals, songs and demonstrations be eliminated? Should presidential candidates address the convention before the balloting? *Should T.V. be permitted to the floor of the convention?*

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S. J. Michelson*

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4. CONCLUSION

It is my conviction that the work of this Commission is critical to the future welfare of the Party.

Whether we reenlist the enthusiasm and strength of alienated youth, whether we continue our salutary alliances with all groups of forward looking Americans, whether we successfully withstand the continued assaults upon our long-range goals and aspirations for the Nation (mounted by the present Administration) depends to a great extent on the outcome of these deliberations.

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TAKE UP WITH O'HARA

Steve Schlossberg -Willcome in for a meeting with O'H

Atlanta Meeting -J R Kirkland-February 20, 1970-Dinkler Hotel -Kaler

Missouri Meeting -Fred Israel

Party for Marauders

Opening Remarks for Hearing

Replacement for Dick Dubord - Letter to his family

Auerbach dinner on the nite of January 13 (Tues) in Minneapolis

OPENING REMARKS FOR O'HARA IN MINNEAPOLIS ON JAN. 15

Ladies and Gentlemen-----Let me open these proceedings by telling you how happy the Commission on Rules is to be able to have its first Regional Hearing in Minneapolis. We were delighted to make this our first stop because we were sure that we would not only receive a warm and friendly welcome from the party leaders and good Democrats in the five states we have asked to participate, but also because we were sure that we would be hearing from witnesses who can make a real contribution to the work of the Commission.

Before telling you who we are and why we are here -- or something about the mandate given to the Commission on Rules by the last Democratic National Convention-- let me hasten to thank all of you who have taken the time to be with us today and especially Dick Moe, Paul Tschida, Norm Sherman and the many others who worked so hard to make these arrangements.

Every National Committeeman and Committee woman and every State Chairman and Chairwoman, where you have them, as well as the other Party officials we spoke to in Minnesota, Wisconsin, Iowa and the Dakotas responded enthusiastically to the news that we were coming and promised cooperation. Many others in the academic community also took special pains to be of assistance.

We were sure that holding our first meeting in this part of the Country was a wise move and our expectations have certainly been confirmed..

The Commission on Rules was established by Senator Fred Harris in response to the directives adopted by the last National Convention. We were brought into being by action of the National Committee. The Members of the Commission were appointed last Spring, and we have met three times in Washington before embarking on this nation-wide series of hearings ... The Commission is

Any political institution must constantly be in the process of changing and developing to meet the challenges of the times. This Party is determined to take a good hard look at itself and to see whether our ways of conducting ~~our~~ party business require revamping in order to be responsive to the needs of the Country and the aspirations of the electorate of the 1970s. By that I do not mean that we necessarily will cast aside traditional procedures just for the sake of change, but we must re-examine the way we have gone about conducting our affairs and make sure that we are not preserving past practices nor relying on custom and tradition to the detriment of relevancy and progress.

We certify our delegates to the convention and nominate our national standard almost bearers in every living room in America. We enunciate our platform and make our appeal for support before this same vast audience. The forum in which we do these things and the parliamentary procedures which are employed must commend themselves because of their rationality, equity, adherence to due process and just general appeal to decency and fairness which the voter is entitled to expect from this great Party. In order to achieve this goal, and with these ends in mind, this Commission is now embarking on these regional inquiries

composed of twenty-seven members. Among them are Mrs. Liv Bjorlie, the National Committee woman from North Dakota, Mrs. A. June Franklin, Iowa State Representative and House Minority Whip, Professor Carl Auerbach of the School of Law of the University of Minnesota, Mr. Don Peterson, Co-Chairman of the New Democratic Coalition from Eau Claire, Wisconsin, and the Hon. Joseph Crangle, Chairman of the Erie County, New York, Democratic Committee, all of whom are on the platform with me. I am Jim O'Hara, United States Representative from Michigan, and we are accompanied by Howard G. Gamser, of Washington, Counsel to the Commission.

We are here to take testimony from those who have evidenced an interest in helping the party scrutinize its practices and procedures dealing with the nomination of our national candidates. I won't, at this time; take too much time to tell you about the areas of party practice and procedure in which we have an interest. Our Issues and Alternatives publication, which has been widely distributed and additional copies of which are available by writing to the Commission, care of the Democratic National Committee in Washington, attempts to set out the parameters of our jurisdiction



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