

002020

Retail clerks
Chicago, Ill.
June 4, 1970

HUBERT HUMPHREY SPEECH

June 4, 1970

Let me, first of all, express to Tom, here, and to all of the members of this seminar group that have gathered from the Central Division, my thanks for the invitation that came to me. I have some of my Minnesota friends here, and you know who they are, and, of course, I don't want to be in any way prejudiced or parochial, but you'll have to go a long way to beat them, fellows and ladies. And, I want to thank Barney Mezzo and Jerry Riegels, Al Haynes, and others that may be here. I know that these three gentlemen are with us. I want to thank them for what they have done for me, personally, and in my public life; but more importantly, what they have done for working people, what they have done for the labor movement, and what they have been doing to help our State--Minneapolis, St. Paul, and Duluth. I guess that I can say to Al that some of my earliest support, when I ran for the Senate the first time in Minnesota, was from the Retail Clerks up there in Duluth. They were well organized even at that time. I want to say to you what I said to Tom and Jim--Tom Russow and Jim Huntley--on the way in from the airport. I believe I said it this way--that I shall always be grateful for the wonderful support that I received from the Retail Clerks International--from this great organization in 1968, when I went from one end of this country to another. I tell you right now that the labor movement in the United States, my friends in organized labor (and you surely symbolized the best), that labor movement was the main bullwork of our strength. I can share this intimate thought with you: "Had we not have had you, I don't believe that I could have kept on in those early days." But I knew that I spoke for working men and women in this country. I had been with them 25 years of my public life. Twenty-five years ago this week, I was elected Mayor of Minneapolis. Twenty-five years ago July 1, I took office as the Mayor of Minneapolis, and I was endorsed by every single labor union, every single international and local, everyone of them in the City of Minneapolis, when I ran for Mayor, and I have never been without them in every election that I have ever participated in. So, I think that I can say that I have a kind of a blood relationship with the labor movement, and I carry the gold card here, with the nicest part about it, with the Retail Clerks, I don't have to pay any dues and get all the benefits. It's really great! (applause)

And you were always there. I remember going to these airports. I'd come in, like I came in to the O'Hare Inn here tonight, and here, by golly, here were these signs again. You really, honestly, caught me unawares. I didn't expect it, honestly, and I see the big sign over there--"Welcome Hubert H. Humphrey--the Retail Clerks Active Ballot Club." Well, let me tell you, we are active, and I will lay it on the

line. If we had had just a few more people that were just a little more active, you would have been holding this meeting, and I would have been your host, in the East Room at the White House, and we'd have had it at the taxpayers' expense. (applause) And really and truly that's one of the things I was looking to--of having men and women that represent organized labor...not just a few of them, but large numbers of them, working with me down there in Washington. That's one of the reasons I wanted to be your President. I wanted America to know that the real strength of this country is not in the handful of self-appointed or highly selected individuals, but it's in the great numbers of people that make up the working force of this country. And I have been saying these very things to students, and I have been saying them around the country as I have traveled in these months since November 1968, or I should say, more specifically, since January 1969. And every place I have gone, I have just stood up and said, "I am proud! Just as proud as I can be to have had the support of organized labor in my campaign for the presidency." And not only had support, but enthusiastic support, with money, and string, and chalk, and anything else that was needed--and I want you to know that I haven't quit fighting yet! I want you to know that I intend to be teamed up with you as long as you want me, and as long as I can be with you, I intend to be there as a working brother for the things that are good for this country and particularly for people! (applause)

Now, I don't want to go another minute without asking you to remember me to Jim Suffridge, without asking you to remember me to Jim Housewright, and all of your officers. I missed Chuck Lipson here today. I know he's back in Washington, because he has work to do back there in the Congress. But I remember the people that carried the banner, and I just want you to know that these people are close to my heart.

You know, Monday night of this week, we had what they call, "Labor's Party" for Professor Humphrey up in Minneapolis and St. Paul, over at the Prom Ballroom. We had 1300 of our friends from organized labor across the State of Minnesota. (They all had to pay a little, you know, to get in--it wasn't one of those free ones). (laughter) We could have had a lot more, you know, if we'd have been putting out the pop free, but we were charging them as they came in. Thirteen hundred of them! Mrs. Humphrey and I were there...we go as a team.....and we were there having a wonderful time. First a reception and cocktails and hor'dourves and then a marvelous dinner smorgasbord style, like we have it up home. Thirteen hundred people--and then we had speeches, and then we danced, and I'll tell you how important I think it was. I kept my speech down to 28 minutes (laughter and applause) So we could get some dancing in, you see? It was just like a family

party--truly it was! And all across our State, this is the sort of feeling we have.

Now, I am going to talk to you, because you have been here a long time and I want to talk to you, as I said on the way over here again to Jim and to Tom and others, I said I am not going to try to make a great oration here....I am not going to arouse your passions, as such. What I would like to do is talk to you, as I see it now....the political picture. I am a political man. You know that these last few months I have been a professor of government at the University of Minnesota...at the Macalester College. I have been doing work around the country; I write a column....some of you people may see it in some papers (I wish it were in more papers)....But, basically, my real interest is in public life and it is in public affairs, and I haven't had that interest at all subdued! As a matter of fact, every so often I get a wave of nausea that comes over me just thinking about how it could have been. The things that we, together, could have done, and I have never forgotten that we must do things together. There is one activity (I was going to say profession--I am not sure it's quite that), but there surely is one activity that teaches you that you do very little alone....that's in politics! When I hear people say, "Well, I got elected all by myself," I say that that fellow is not long for this world....the real world of public life! You do not get anything done that amounts to much by yourself. You have to have supporters. You have to have people that will sacrifice; you have to have people who are generous; you have to have people, mind you, who just never get credit for anything. They just let you take the front of the stage, take all of the bows, and all the plaudits, and these are all the kind of people that make it possible for a person to have public life. And, I have had all this kind of support all across the country.

Well, I want to talk to you now about what we have been trying to do. When the new President was elected, I made up my mind that I was going to treat him exactly as I would want to be treated myself. It's a pretty good rule, by the way. I felt that the country--I mean the President was entitled to have time to work out a program to organize his cabinet...his administration...to get the feel of what the country was all about, and what he was going to do about it. And some of my partisan friends in the Democratic Party would say, "What's wrong with Humphrey? Why isn't he lashing out at President Nixon?" Well, I'll be very frank with you. The reason that I didn't is that I, first of all, didn't think it was fair, and secondly, I didn't think it would be even good politics. I think most Americans are fair...they really are. They want a fair shake of the dice....they say "Well, don't, you know, mess it up....let's see if we can work it out....let's give the fellow a chance." That's exactly what we've proceeded to do, and I waited, like

you, to see what was going to happen, and I saw very little action. Oh! I saw lots of pronouncements and lots of speeches and lots of use of the television-- I expected that. I watched the President put together a cabinet. I saw his Vice President travel across this country speaking and, at times, arousing emotions that I think would have been better not aroused. But I made up my mind that I would wait and see what happened, and then it started to happen. Now, the first thing I want to say is there is no coordinating policy in this government. It makes for good news to have the cabinet officers running off in six or seven different directions, each having something different to say. But I am here to say that, while that may make good copy, it's no way to run a country. A president must have a team and there must be a policy; there must be a plan of action; there must be a program; and there must be follow-through. And when I see, for example, the Secretary of the Treasury having one view on the tax bill, the President having another view on it, and somebody else from the administration, the Council of Economic Advisors taking another view. Oh yes! It's something everybody can grab on to and say, "Well, I heard one of the administration officials say this," and somebody else says, "Yes, and I heard him say that." It may add up, if you just put it together one, two, three to add up something. But what it adds up to in my mind is that no one quite has made up their mind what to do. Now we're going to talk a little economics here.

When I see the President of the United States say to us that we must lower our rhetoric. When things get hot...cool the rhetoric, and then I see some of his top spokesmen, in fact, his number one man elevate the rhetoric...heat up the rhetoric....I say, "That's no way to run a country!" I hear the President say, "We must bring ourselves together. We must have more togetherness; we must learn to live as one people." And then I see this administration slow down the program; put on the brakes for bringing about racial justice in this country. I say, "That's no way to run a country." When I hear from high places that we must have consideration for one another, and that we must have an open mind, an open country, and an open government, and an open policy, and an open heart..... In other words, practice a sense of brotherhood and respect for one another. And then I see nominations to the highest courts of the land which surely do not fulfill those objectives, I say, "That's no way to run a country." And, I want to remind you that, in 1968, I told you that some of the great issues (and I outlined most of them) would be whether or not we were going to make real steady progress...forward movement in race relations in this country.

Changing of tape.....

Middle income, particularly if you are middle income, lower middle income, low income, if you are minority, or whomever you may be....what you want for your young men and women, your children, no matter who you are, is a good school with

with good facilities, good teachers, modern teaching techniques. And to divide up these programs, as if somehow or another all we were interested in was this group or that group, is wrong! We need programs for the people!

And now take a look at what's happening to our economy. Well, I didn't think that I would have to come around to talk to you about a subject that we thought was behind us ...namely, losing jobs. Now, there are representatives here from cities who know what I am talking about. In Minneapolis, Minnesota, the other day, one company laid off 1200 workers...and go to Detroit...go to Los Angeles and find that 45 to 50% of the teenagers between the ages of 16 and 20 are unemployed...and in the black community, over 60%. And they haven't had a meeting of the Youth Opportunity Council since I left that office of the Vice Presidency. We used to work to get jobs for kids and young people...if it was only summer work, because I am here to tell you that those idle hands, and young men and women standing on street corners get in trouble. What's worse, not only getting into trouble, but they bring other people into it, and what a tragedy for our country.

Can you imagine what would have been going on in this country right now, if there had been a Democrat in the White House and the stock market was down below 700 on the Dow Jones average? It was down here just a short time ago below 650 and it dropped again. Why, my dear friends, they'd have had a caricature of me up on the wall! You see that picture over there? They'd have had people with darts...little poison darts...throwing at it. (laughter) But you know, maybe we should have expected it. I leave it to you. When a certain crowd takes over in this country....conservative republicanism.....you always have some economic troubles. Now, you can say it's primarily due to the war, or it's due to this or that, but the point is, there wasn't any war on from 1952 to 1960. The Korean War was being settled; their truce was being consummated. But from 1954 to 1960, there were three recessions and those three recessions, my fellow Americans, cost this country more in lost production and lost income than all the cost that we would ever have to have for the next 20 years to control pollution, or to pay for education, or to rehabilitate our cities. Lost income from lost jobs from lower production...that's the most expensive waste this country ever could possibly have, and we're beginning to get it again. I told a group here the other day, I said, "You know, I don't mind if some of my good business friends say they are Republicans. You know, I mean, it sometimes gives you a kind of a little lift in certain social circles. It's even all right if they want to carry a Republican card and to go around and say to their neighbors that 'I belong to the Republican Club,' but, I said, "for gosh sakes, when they are handling other people's money, as they do in the modern

corporation, because many people in America are stockholders in these corporations, I hope that, while we give the management the privilege of saying that they are Republicans that they vote Democratic." (laughter, applause)

And it sounds like it's a joke, but it's deadly serious! Because here we are now, again, high interest...tight money. The one group in the country that's making more profit than ever before in their life are big banks. And one of the biggest factors in the rise in the cost of living is the interest on money. Now you just remember that! And you say you heard that from Professor Humphrey, and I can document it as a professor in political economy. When you get interest rates on government certificates, and higher than they have ever been in 110 years, which goes through the Civil War, through World War I and World War II, something's wrong! And that's what's happening!

Take a look at what's happening in our housing industry in this country. It's in shambles! Take a look....that if a young man or a young married couple gets a home in this country...he is burdened for 30 years with a hidden tax rate. And this government sits idly by..oh! Somebody is going to say "Well, what can they do about it?" Plenty! By a concerted policy of monetary policy, fiscal policy, and by the President of the United States not waiting until next week... 19 months.....18 months after he has been in office, when hundreds of people have been liquidated...thousands of people have been out of a job....when hundreds and thousands of young families have had to buy houses at exorbitant prices at high rates, and have the President come on 18 months later and say to you that he is going to talk to you about the economy and pump you up a little bit. I remember he said a little while ago he said that if he had money, he'd buy stocks now. Do you know who said that before? Herbert Hoover....that's right! Herbert Hoover! (laughter, applause) The difference is, I forgive Hoover...he had no experience to draw from....nobody else had said that before him! (laughter, applause) That's a fact!

When I grew up in a Midwest town (and I think I have some appreciation of what a small businessman goes through my father was a small businessman. I saw my father pay high interest....I saw him suffer through tight money policies....and I have said that they took ten years out of my father's life. He died ten years early because of a depression....It broke his heart and broke his health. And now we are on the very....we're really on the steps of a recession. We've got the strange combination which it takes an awful lot of gimmicking to put together, of inflation and recession at the same time. You really gotta be clever and acute to make that one, but they got it. And don't kid yourself...prices are not coming down, and it isn't as if every trade union in America and every industrial union in

202027
this country has already negotiated a new contract, because you are going to be held accountable for it, you know. That's going to be the propaganda line. It's simply because this government, this administration decided that it was going to let the forces of the market place work their will without any regard to what we call the public need or the public welfare. Now, I remember another President (don't worry, I like a little background music, it doesn't bother me a bit--music in background...laughter)....I remember President Johnson. I worked with him. A lot of people didn't like a lot of things that President did, and all I'm going to say is let history judge him. Don't judge too quickly. But I know one thing...that when certain companies in this country decided that they were going to raise the price of steel umpteen dollars a ton, and when certain motor companies said they were going to raise the price of a car \$100.00 a car, and when certain other companies said they were going to raise the price of copper and so forth, President Johnson called them into the White House and said, "No you're not...not as long as I am President. We're not going to let you do it."

And when the steel companies and the steel union (and you know of my close friendship with members of the steelworkers), I remember when the President called I. W. Abel in, with the top leaders of the steel industry and said, "Now, listen, gentlemen, we can't afford to have a precipitous price rise here, we can't afford to have a long strike here, and I want you to go on over there to the executive office building on the floor right above Vice President Humphrey, and he'll be listening to you below...and I'll be watching you from across the street, and I want you to report in to me every day and tell me how you are coming and I want you to negotiate in free, open, collective bargaining, a contract that stays reasonably well within the economic guidelines. And they did! And the American people were not taken to the cleaners. The workers received a well deserved wage increase, certain selected steel products were given some modest price increase...but the overall impact of that agreement was in the national interest.' That's a President that goes to work! It was what we called jaw-boning. And, let me tell you, when a President jaw-bones you...you are jawed! (applause and laughter)

Well, I noticed the other day unemployment rate was up to 4.8, and I hear now that its going up to over five, and now we have the summer upon us with college students by the thousands coming out. And what's happening to them? I was listening last night to our TV in Minneapolis, and they had the number of young men and women who were graduating that had been trained as teachers. No jobs. Thousands of people in the electronics field. No jobs! The day when people came to recruit the young student is all over. The student is out hitting the pavement again. Well, as one of them said, "Maybe that's all right...maybe it'll teach us the importance of a job." But it's a different ball game. Now the economy is in trouble--serious trouble! It's going to take policy--fiscal

and monetary. Now, why didn't this administration present a tax bill? Now we need tax reform. You and I know that. There were a lot of inequities in the tax law. I remember when I was asked whether or not I was going to present a tax bill. I said, "I can't say for sure, but I imagine so." "If you do," Mr. Humphrey, "what will you do about the oil depletion allowance?" I said, "Well, no President can present a tax bill that doesn't reduce that oil depletion allowance, because that is one of the big loop holes in the tax laws, and if I have to present a tax bill, obviously I've got to reduce it." Well, ladies and gentlemen, I didn't get much help from the oil industry. In fact, all of the plans that we'd had for some of the financial help for the month of September went down the drain. The same question was asked of the man that is now President and he said, "I'll take a 27½ depletion loss. You don't get anything like that...you working people don't get those kind of special deductions. Twenty-seven and one-half percent....and the first time that this Congress..this country...has had a tax bill passed by the Congress that wasn't presented by a President since 1922 was this Congress and this administration....and you can't write an equitable tax bill on the floor of the Senate in the House...it's too intricate...it requires executive direction, executive leadership, but the President of the United States couldn't do it, because he had already made some other commitments. We pay a high price for that.

Well, there are just a few other little things that I think we need to do. I think we've got to get our priorities straightened around here now. You've heard this a long time, but we need to. Let me just..let you just conjure this for a moment...just think about this for a moment: You are living in this great, wonderful country of ours (and I happen to think it still is, you know). I am not a bit ashamed to get up and say it's the greatest place in the world, and I've been around. That this great, wonderful country of ours is the only modern industrialized country on the face of the earth that has no planning whatsoever at the governmental level for the future of this nation. You hear these figures that our population is going to be 300 million by the year 2000, and it will. I want you to ask the first educator that you meet if he has the slightest idea of what we're going to have to do in the year 2000 in terms of classrooms, and teachers, and books, and facilities for education of our children. What's the price tag?...what's the plan?....What's the rate of scheduling of a classroom construction?...What kind of schools? We don't have the slightest idea. We just live by hope and by chance. I am looking out here at what I hope is a good, healthy audience and yet, ladies and gentlemen, 30 million people in this country (adults) are without any health insurance at all. You've negotiated some, thank goodness, in your contracts. We have some Medicare and Medicaide for our elderly,

but we have millions of people in this country with no health care at all and you don't really have any health insurance...you've got sickness insurance. You have insurance that helps take care of the catastrophic costs of illness or the cost of catastrophic illness. Most of you don't have health programs where you can go get preventive medical care, where you can get inoculations, where you can get check-ups; or you can have all kinds of tests made to see whether or not you are well or not.....You really have to get sick before you can collect, before the plan goes into effect. Now, don't you think it's just about time that, in this country, where we have the sixteenth...we're number sixteen in infant mortality rate in the world, just think of that. This great America, with the finest medicine in the world. We've got the best...We've got the best doctors...We have the finest nurses....We have the greatest pharmaceutical enterprises....We've got the best in professionals...Make no mistake about it, but we haven't used them properly. We have an uncoordinated, totally uncoordinated medical system in this country. Oh, there are a few plans, like the Kaiser Plan out in California, the one they've got in New York City known as HIP--where you get, what we call, group practice. But we've got 20 states in this country that deny even doctors to join together for group practice, even though group practice can reduce costs, can improve health. I spoke on this yesterday morning at the University of Minnesota at one of our big health conferences.

Changing of tape.....

And we have got to say so and stand up and say so. It's a tragedy! All of this! And we are not going to make America better by condoning it. As a matter of fact, as I said to some of my militant friends, "Look! You're bringing on repression. I believe in dissent. I've been a dissenter most of my life, and you believe in the right to picket, the right to speak. I believe in the right of free speech no matter even if what is said is something repugnant to me. I remember what old Voltaire, the old French philosopher said: "Even though I do not agree with a word of what you had to say, I shall defend on to death your right to say it." I think every man has a right to be heard...He doesn't necessarily need to be taken seriously, but he has the right to be heard. And I have little time for people that try to prevent it, because the processes of democracy are open in this country, and what we need to do is encourage young and old to participate politically, to join the ballot clubs, to register, and to change the registration laws. Listen...isn't it outrageous? Here we are.....listen,

did you ever figure out....no, you never had to go down to the county court house to register for your taxes. Oh no....you own a house....you own a car... you own some personal property....I don't know what your respective tax laws are in each state, but they just register you and they come and even visit you to make sure that the assessment is right, you know? (laughter) Now listen, a government that can register you for tax purposes and a government that can send out a special investigator to assess you for tax purposes can also come out and register you for voting purposes. (applause) Forty-seven million eligible Americans last election did not vote. There were more people that didn't vote than voted for any one man for the presidency. Just think of that in this country. And, I would venture to say that a goodly number of the loudest grippers about what's going on in this country were non-voters. Now, some of them couldn't vote because of the obsolete registration laws. Some of them couldn't vote because there were people that prevented them from voting. Some of them just didn't vote because they didn't care. And I want you to make sure that they care, and I want you to go home to your respective states and ask every state legislator, "Hey, what's the registration laws around here? How come you can tax me, but you don't get me registered? Answer me, will you?" And get to your congressman and tell him to vote for that 1965 Voter's Registration Act to get registrars to get people registered, and if you can have registrars to register people in the South, and we need them, we ought to have open registration across this country for everybody...at least for President and Vice President. These are things that we can do, and it will take away a little bit of the hostility. But I want the labor movement once again to stand up to say to young and old alike, "Don't just stand by and be pushed around now. Just simply say, "Now, listen here! We've been fighting for economic justice and social justice for years. Rather than getting your scorn, we want your help, and that's what you've got to say, because it's right!

Now, above all, this nation of ours needs peace. It doesn't need revolution. It needs peace. It needs change, but it doesn't need disorder, and I think we ought to keep those things clearly in mind. We have the means of changing the system through the ballot, through legitimate protest, through dissent, through debate, through all the many things that we do. The labor movement has changed this country. My gosh! How you've changed it! There are men in this room...when it was as difficult to organize a labor organization and to bargain collectively as it would have been, my friends, to take a trip to the moon back in the thirties. It was almost impossible. You changed it. We've changed America. We've changed America....We've put on the statute books, at last, laws that put the law on the side of all people. The Civil Rights Act of 1964...We haven't cleaned our mind

of all this stuff yet. We've got a lot of purging...You know, as I tell my student friends: "Listen, waging war on pollution is more than waging it on air pollution, and water pollution, and industrial waste....the pollution of your mind....the pollution of bad habits...of prejudice...of discrimination... get that pollution out of there, too....the pollution of your body. Lots of pollution to get rid of." But what this country needs and what it cries out for today is peace. Now, I am not a fool about it, and I am not naive. I know that it's not easy. I was just reading here to find out that throughout all of recorded history, there has hardly been a year that somewhere in the world there wasn't a war. Isn't that something to have to say...but it's a fact. But we ought to, at our stage of development, try to find better ways of meeting international disputes other than the latent use of force.

I condemn no one; I have been a part of this government; I stand as guilty as anyone, but I want you to know, my friends, that the time now comes when we have to make decisions. You can't have everything. When I ran as your candidate for President, most of you here, and I hope all of you, supported me. I spoke to this nation in September from Salt Lake City in a national broadcast for which we didn't have the money; we had to borrow every dime of it. And I went on the air and said that I considered the first responsibility and the highest priority of the next President of the United States was to end the war in Southeast Asia, and to bring peace to that troubled part of the world, and to bring our men home. I meant that! I was the only person that said it, I might add. With due respect for those that were in power, you may recall that I didn't exactly get a pat-on-the-back even from the White House. And the man who is now in the White House said that it was irresponsible for me to say that. But I didn't think so. And I said that we had to enter into a program of accelerated systematic withdrawal of American forces. Not to cop out.....not to bug out systematic withdrawal...That I said we had to change the battle orders so that we would lower the level of casualties...that we had to train the forces of South Vietnam for their own defense....that sooner or later they had to take responsibility for their own sovereignty and their own independence...but that we must consult with out allies. And I said that, if elected President of the United States, my first act in international policy will be meet with the leaders in Saigon and other allies to lay out a program for ending this struggle. I still think that's it, because every problem we have here at home is tainted with it. It doesn't mean that if the war were over, all the problems would be over....don't kid yourself...because a lot of them will still be there. In fact, I remember when the war was over in Korea, we had a lot of problems and we didn't do much with the resources that were saved either when I hear people say, "Well, if we could just get the war over, we could spend all that money on the things that we are talking about here." No, we

002032
didn't then, we just reduced taxes....primarily corporate taxes....so you gotta be careful who goes to Congress...and ask him: "What do you plan on doing if the war is over? What kind of plans do you have? What's the program?"

But I think that this is absolutely necessary, and I have supported the President in his initial stages of withdrawal, as you know. I don't want to play politics with Vietnam. I, frankly, don't think it's very good politics. I think this is too serious and so many people have so many confused and mixed views about it that the best thing to do is try to find an answer to it. I don't think there is any political plus for a man that plays politics with it. I really believe that the President of the United States wants peace. I really do. I am not here to tell you that he doesn't....and I commend him, and congratulated him and supported him in the beginning of his program of troop withdrawal... and I am pleased that he said he going to continue it. But I have to be honest with you. I do not think that the shortest road from war to peace is through Cambodia or the expansion of the war. Now, I know there are mixed emotions about this. I hope the President is right...I swear to God, I do! I want every hope that he has that this war will be shortened by that action will come true. I don't care if the price of political victory for any one of us is that the President stumbles on Vietnam...it's too big a price. We ought to be able to win these elections without having to go through that price. In fact, I love my country much more than I do the Democratic Party...and I love people a whole lot more than just partisan politics. But it is my view that you don't shorten a war by getting it expanded. I hope that Mr. Nixon's judgement of the other night turns out well, but I have great doubts. But be that as it may, it is important that we pull together to get this peace and to get this war behind us and then to strengthen the institutions of the United Nations and other institutions for peace-keeping purposes, because remember this: If the United States quits its role as a peace-keeper, that doesn't mean that there is going to be peace in this world. There'll have to be some other role that will have to be filled by something else, and I hope it will be filled by a stronger UN. And you know, this is the 25th year of the UN. I had hoped that we would present a program, and we ought to... it was 25 years ago this July that this great international organization had its genesis, and I would have hoped that our country would have come forward in a great moral surge of new principle and program to strengthen international agencies for keeping peace...But once again, we are dropping the ball....We are not doing it. Now, I want us to pull together. This is the elections of 1970; these are important to you wherever you are from. We just got our new census report...at least a temporary one...up in Minnesota. We are going to re-district

002033
in Minnesota, gentlemen, in 1970, and I am here to tell you that, if we don't elect a legislature and a governor that has some sympathy for the objectives and the aims of this organization, the Retail Clerks and others like you..you are going to suffer for ten years or longer, because there will be re-districting of every legislative district across this country and every congressional district and you've got a stake in it. Your family's got a stake in it; you've got a stake in this election second to none. I have a lot of people say to me, "What are you going to do in '72?" I said, "Listen, don't worry about that...Let's talk about what we are going to do together in 1970." And, if we can have a liberal progressive victory for the things that we stand for in 1970, I'll guarantee you that there'll be some better prospects for whomever is the candidate of the Democratic Party in 1972...make no mistake about it. But, if we don't do any better in 1970, there won't be much of a prize to get that nomination, I can tell you. It's the chips are down this time, and that's why I want your ballot club to be active...registration...issues...study....workshops....seminars....pointing out the economic issues. I hear a lot about this new politics. Listen, new politics are old politics. When you are out of a job, you are out of a job. When your interest is up...it's up. When your credit is tight...it's tight. If you haven't got a house...you're out a house. And, if you can't buy the kids clothes and you can't pay your bills...you're in trouble. Still old past passion politics. It is the politics of the people, and what we need today is a new view of a new vision of America. Where are we going to go? What are we going to have here? And not be worried about whether somebody writes an article about the new left or the new politics. The new left isn't any better than the old one and not as good, as far as I can see. And in old politics or new politics, the only politics that I know that is worthwhile is the politics for the people. That's what you stood for. Now you go on out and organize. You're here to do that, too, mostly. Expand your membership...take your case to the people. You're going to have a better time right now to organize than for a long time, for the simple reason that people are beginning to come back to earth. They are beginning to see that there are some things that are happening that are not too good. Solid, ordinary things that have caught us time after time, as I have been discussing here with you this afternoon...this evening.

Well, I've poured out my strength to you here for a little while. I want you to go back now to your respective unions...your locals....I want you to take a message to them. A message, first of thanks...but the best thanks is the kind that comes from results, and we have to have results. Those of you that are here from Illinois...I hope that you will elect that wonderful, young son of a great

man, but a man who stands in his own right...Adlai Stevenson III. I hope you elect him to office. (applause) You folks here from Minnesota...well, you stick around next weekend and you may have some work to do up in Minnesota... (applause)...I haven't got all the other states pinpointed here, but every one of you have House members to be elected...assembly members to be elected... some places Senators...some places Governors....And, of course, I am a partisan, in a sense, but I want most of it is, what kind of a person are we electing. You find out! Where does he stand on the great issues? Where does he stand on the issue of equal opportunity? Where does he stand on economic issues? Where does he stand on health care for you and your children? Where does he stand on housing? Are we going to build housing in this country, or is it just going to be commercial construction? Are we going to have beautiful new office buildings and have slums in the shadows of those office buildings, or are we going to have places for those people to live? What kind of schools are we going to have? Is there going to be enough school space? Are there going to be good teachers? What kind of roads are we going to have? After all, you have to get there. What kind of a transit system are we going to have? What kind of air are we going to breathe? What kind of water are we going to drink? What kind of recreation are we going to have? These are all things within the public domain, and, above all, how are we going to treat each other. Are we going to start to treat each other like you do in this Union? Call each other brothers and sisters? Now, let me tell you something: If it's good enough to call each other brothers and sisters, regardless of race, creed or religion, in this union, it's good enough to act that way in this country. That doesn't mean that we are always sweet and kind to each other, but it means that we have at least respect for each other. And, I also want you to know that 1970 can have an awful lot to say about the kind of a world we are going to live in, because if this country of ours shows the kind of concern and compassion for our own people that we ought to have, it will indicate to the world that we are a peaceful people.... that we want to live in peace and in justice. I think that's the program of the Retail Clerks International Association, unless I am mistaken, my gold card told me that's what you're for....that's what I'm here for. (applause)

Tom Russow: Mr. Vice President, may I say to you that actions speak louder than words, and I hope that our reception has spoken loudly how we feel about you, sir.

Humphrey: Well, you always make it clear.

Russow: Wonderful! We have one thing, if we could.....

Humphrey: No uncertain trumpet here.

Russow: One thing...We also have two Provinces of Canada represented here in this Central Division, and we have a man by the name of Dennis Allard that would like to present something to you from Canada.....Dennis...

Humphrey: Splendid, than you!

Allard: Brother Humphrey, or Senator Humphrey (I hope), we, in Manitoba, the Province north of your state, is celebrating the Centennial Anniversary of Confederation, and we, naturally, are inviting guests to come to celebrate with us this year....and we wish to present to you the Centennial pin, and hope that you will visit our Province.

Humphrey: Well, thank you...I come there often....

Applause

Humphrey: Yes, I gotta tell you a joke...sit down....

Laughter

Humphrey: You know, I remember when I was Mayor of Minneapolis, the Mayor of Winnipeg came down to visit us, and I remember, he said...we had a luncheon...and there were a lot of our Minneapolis people around, and he had that good, English brogue, Canadian style, and he said, "Sir," he said, they addressed him as "his worship," you know....and he looked at me and he said, "What do they call you?" And I said, "Well, your worship, it just depends on who you're talking to around this town." (applause and laughter)....Well, you give my greetings....thank you, very much.

Now, have fun!

pal



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