

REMARKS OF SENATOR HUBERT H. HUMPHREY

AMALGAMATED MEAT CUTTERS LEGISLATIVE CONFERENCE

Washington, D. C.

May 10, 1977

It is a pleasure to be here this morning with all my friends in the Amalgamated Meat Cutters Union to participate in your Legislative Conference.

Today we hear a lot about the evils, mostly imagined, of American unions. A major nation-wide attack on the trade union movement, well financed and not afraid to let the facts interfere with their rhetoric, is well underway. Their objective is clear: prevent any improvements in labor law, in minimum wage law, and in responsible social and economic policy, from being enacted.

My friends, it is high time for a counter-attack of our own. It's time we organized a "Labor Truth Squad." And every time the mudslingers and distorters of American labor history raise their outrageous voices, we should respond with the facts. Frankly, I am sick and tired of reading and hearing totally unjustified abuse heaped on the American labor movement.

Many of us have been involved in the labor movement for years. We know there have been instances of corruption and selfishness in some unions. But there also have been people who have stolen from the church treasury, and we do not abandon our religion. There have been a few who have disgraced the legal profession, but we don't condemn the whole legal system because of the transgressions of a few. And even politics has come in for its share of bad publicity, but still the business of government goes on.

I am proud of the American labor movement -- proud to have worked with it -- proud to be a member of the great labor family.

Labor has been a strong and steady voice not only for the American worker and his family, but also for the poor, the elderly, the young, the disabled and those who are the victims of discrimination and prejudice.

Throughout our nation's history the American labor movement has been a cutting edge of social progress, economic justice and political democracy. It has championed the cause of people in every generation. And it has shown in all its deeds that it shares with Thomas Jefferson the fundamental belief that:

"The care of human life and happiness is the first and the only legitimate object of good government."

It is fair to say that, with all of the limitations of organized labor, it has exercised its power not only for its own members but for all Americans.

It has cared about the child of the unorganized as well as the organized worker.

It has cared about the civil rights of all our citizens.

It has cared about the housing, health and neighborhoods of all our working people.

Who were the leaders in the fight to provide medicare for the fathers, mothers, grandfathers and grandmothers of the unorganized? The American labor movement.

Who has fought to see that the unorganized workers are provided with at least a minimum wage floor below which their wages cannot drop? The American labor movement.

Who has fought to see to it that the unskilled and unorganized get the training they need to earn a decent living? The American labor movement.

American labor has stood up for those too weak to stand for themselves, fought for those too weary to fight for themselves, and given visibility to those whose only crime was that they were not seen.

For 30 years of public life I have found organized labor to be on the side of the weak, on the side of the poor, on the side of the sick, and on the side of the handicapped.

Who has come to the Congress year after year in support of programs to help these people? Who has put its muscle behind those programs? The American labor movement, that's who.

Through community service and political action, American labor has brought progress to our people and honor to our land.

Last November you in organized Labor spent your time, your energy and your money to elect a progressive Democratic Congress and a new Democratic President. Your efforts were decisive in the election of President Carter in that close and hard fought campaign.

The American people owe you their gratitude.

The Democratic Party owes you its thanks.

The President of the United States owes you his continued friendship and support.

And don't let any of us forget it.

Today I want to remind you of what your victory should produce, what I believe the legislative agenda of this Administration and Congress should be.

First, it should mean a new era of competent and compassionate government. There can and must be a restoration of majority government in the interest of the majority of Americans.

It should mean an end to the destructive and sometimes bitter disputes between the White House and Congress that produced a tragic stalemate in Washington for most of the last eight years. Certainly there will be differences of opinion -- there already have been -- but nothing like the frustrations of the last eight years.

Second, it should mean more jobs for those who have suffered the tragedy and indignity of unemployment for too long. It should mean restoring our economy to a path of healthy economic growth and an end to the economic roller coaster that we have been riding for several years. It should mean jobs for all who are able and willing to work. And it should mean decent wages, including a substantial increase in the minimum wage.

Today, with nearly seven million Americans "officially" unemployed, and with over three million young people out of work, a new commitment to Full Employment is urgently needed. We must establish in law the principle that no American who is able, willing and seeking to work should be denied that opportunity. And we must establish the process that will make that principle a reality for our people.

The Humphrey-Hawkins Full Employment Bill will fulfill this fundamental right of all Americans. And we can accomplish this if we work at it together.

America cannot survive as we know it if we fail to meet this basic need, this fundamental right of our people.

Third, our victory last November should mean a new commitment to revitalize our depressed urban areas and to make our neighborhoods better places in which to live and raise our families -- clean and safe with decent housing for all our families.

At the end of World War II the very survival of Western democracy was seriously threatened all over Europe. Under the wise and determined leadership of President Truman the Marshall Plan was launched. It restored the war-ravaged cities of Europe and laid the basis for their economic recovery and survival as democratic societies.

Today, America's cities require the same kind of bold and imaginative commitment of will and resources if they are to be restored.

We must mount a Marshall Plan to restore America's cities. We must provide the financial resources to rebuild our cities, improve public services and encourage private investment in them.

At the same time, we must reduce the staggering burden of social welfare carried on the shoulders of our hard pressed cities.

No one is naive enough to believe that this job will be easily done. But no thinking American can deny that the magnitude and importance of the problem demands that it be done.

Fourth, our victory should mean a tough, but fair, comprehensive national energy policy. Certainly, there is no easy solution to this problem. If there were one, the problem would have been resolved by now.

For years we lived under the illusion of limitless supplies of cheap gas and oil. The lines at the gas pumps in 1973 and the factory closings and cold homes of this past winter are stark reminders that we were wrong.

Despite the fact that President Carter's energy proposals will not be popular in every detail to every American, he has recognized the need to act and he has done so. His leadership will be rewarded by an outpouring of public support, as long as all Americans are assured that the sacrifices called for will be shared by consumers and business, rich and poor alike.

Fifth, our victory should mean the restoration of American moral leadership around the world. Only a nation with a strong moral commitment to its own citizens can provide a moral tone to the conduct of international affairs.

All of America's great leaders understood that our nation's security lies in the strength of our people -- our people at work, our people in prosperous communities, our people in good homes in decent neighborhoods, our people in sound mental and physical health. This is where our vital national security lies. This is the source of our strength -- moral, political and economic.

Finally, our election victory should mean a new spirit for America -- a new spirit imbued with faith and hope in a brighter future for all our people. It should mean a renewal of the spirit of greatness that guided our forefathers in their vision of the greatest democracy in history. It should mean a government that is truly, "of, by and for the people," dedicated to "life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness."

These should be the fruits of our great victory. These can be the abundant harvest produced by your hard work. But it will only come to be if you continue to work for it. And, if we do, I assure you that America's best days, its greatest days, have only just begun.

REMARKS OF SENATOR HUBERT H. HUMPHREY

AMALGAMATED MEAT CUTTERS LEGISLATIVE CONFERENCE

Leo Murray

Pres. Harry Peole -

- Pat Gorman

- Leon Schachter - V.P.

- Arnold Mayer

- Wendell O'Son (Exum)

*- Steve Coyle - V.P.
(28. V.P. 5)*

IT IS A PLEASURE TO BE HERE THIS MORNING WITH ALL MY
FRIENDS IN THE AMALGAMATED MEAT CUTTERS UNION TO PARTICIPATE
IN YOUR LEGISLATIVE CONFERENCE.

Attack on Labor

↳ TODAY WE HEAR A LOT ABOUT THE EVILS, MOSTLY INAGINED, OF
AMERICAN UNIONS. ↳ A MAJOR NATION-WIDE ATTACK ON THE TRADE UNION
MOVEMENT, WELL FINANCED AND NOT AFRAID TO LET THE FACTS INTERFERE
WITH THEIR RHETORIC, IS WELL UNDERWAY. ↳ THEIR OBJECTIVE IS CLEAR:
PREVENT ANY IMPROVEMENTS IN LABOR LAW, IN MINIMUM WAGE LAW, AND
IN RESPONSIBLE SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC POLICY, FROM BEING ENACTED,

↳ MY FRIENDS, IT IS HIGH TIME FOR A COUNTER-ATTACK OF OUR
OWN. IT'S TIME WE ORGANIZED A "LABOR TRUTH SQUAD." AND EVERY
TIME THE MUDSLINGERS AND DISTORTERS OF AMERICAN LABOR HISTORY
RAISE THEIR OUTRAGEOUS VOICES, WE SHOULD RESPOND WITH THE FACTS.

FRANKLY, I AM SICK AND TIRED OF READING AND HEARING TOTALLY
UNJUSTIFIED ABUSE HEAPED ON THE AMERICAN LABOR MOVEMENT.

✓ MANY OF US HAVE BEEN INVOLVED IN THE LABOR MOVEMENT FOR
YEARS. ✓ WE KNOW THERE HAVE BEEN INSTANCES OF CORRUPTION AND
SELFISHNESS IN SOME UNIONS. ✓ BUT THERE ALSO HAVE BEEN PEOPLE
WHO HAVE STOLEN FROM THE CHURCH TREASURY, AND WE DO NOT
ABANDON OUR RELIGION. ✓ THERE HAVE BEEN A FEW WHO HAVE DISGRACED
THE LEGAL PROFESSION, BUT WE DON'T CONDEMN THE WHOLE LEGAL
SYSTEM BECAUSE OF THE TRANSGRESSIONS OF A FEW. ✓ AND EVEN POLITICS
HAS COME IN FOR ITS SHARE OF BAD PUBLICITY, BUT STILL THE
BUSINESS OF GOVERNMENT GOES ON.

✓ I AM PROUD OF THE AMERICAN LABOR MOVEMENT -- PROUD TO HAVE
WORKED WITH IT -- PROUD TO BE A MEMBER OF THE GREAT LABOR FAMILY.

LABOR HAS BEEN A STRONG AND STEADY VOICE NOT ONLY FOR THE
Union
AMERICAN WORKER AND HIS FAMILY, BUT ALSO FOR THE POOR, THE
ELDERLY, THE YOUNG, THE DISABLED AND THOSE WHO ARE THE VICTIMS
OF DISCRIMINATION AND PREJUDICE.

THROUGHOUT OUR NATION'S HISTORY THE AMERICAN LABOR
MOVEMENT HAS BEEN A CUTTING EDGE OF SOCIAL PROGRESS, ECONOMIC
JUSTICE AND POLITICAL DEMOCRACY. IT HAS CHAMPIONED THE CAUSE
OF PEOPLE IN EVERY GENERATION. AND IT HAS SHOWN IN ALL ITS
DEEDS THAT IT SHARES WITH THOMAS JEFFERSON THE FUNDAMENTAL
BELIEF THAT:

"THE CARE OF HUMAN LIFE AND HAPPINESS IS THE FIRST
AND THE ONLY LEGITIMATE OBJECT OF GOOD GOVERNMENT."

IT IS FAIR TO SAY THAT, WITH ALL OF THE LIMITATIONS OF ORGANIZED LABOR, IT HAS EXERCISED ITS POWER NOT ONLY FOR ITS OWN MEMBERS BUT FOR ALL AMERICANS.

↳ IT HAS CARED ABOUT THE CHILD OF THE UNORGANIZED AS WELL AS THE ORGANIZED WORKER.

↳ IT HAS CARED ABOUT THE CIVIL RIGHTS OF ALL OUR CITIZENS.

↳ IT HAS CARED ABOUT THE HOUSING, HEALTH AND NEIGHBORHOODS OF ALL OUR WORKING PEOPLE.

WHO WERE THE LEADERS IN THE FIGHT TO PROVIDE MEDICARE FOR THE FATHERS, MOTHERS, GRANDFATHERS AND GRANDMOTHERS OF THE UNORGANIZED? THE AMERICAN LABOR MOVEMENT.

↳ WHO HAS FOUGHT TO SEE THAT THE UNORGANIZED WORKERS ARE PROVIDED WITH AT LEAST A MINIMUM WAGE FLOOR BELOW WHICH THEIR WAGES CANNOT DROP? THE AMERICAN LABOR MOVEMENT.

WHO HAS FOUGHT TO SEE TO IT THAT THE UNSKILLED AND
UNORGANIZED GET THE TRAINING THEY NEED TO EARN A DECENT LIVING?

THE AMERICAN LABOR MOVEMENT!

AMERICAN LABOR HAS STOOD UP FOR THOSE TOO WEAK TO STAND
FOR THEMSELVES, FOUGHT FOR THOSE TOO WEARY TO FIGHT FOR THEMSELVES,
AND GIVEN VISIBILITY TO THOSE WHOSE ONLY CRIME WAS THAT THEY
WERE NOT SEEN.

FOR 30 YEARS OF PUBLIC LIFE I HAVE FOUND ORGANIZED LABOR
TO BE ON THE SIDE OF THE WEAK, ON THE SIDE OF THE POOR, ON THE
SIDE OF THE SICK, AND ON THE SIDE OF THE HANDICAPPED.

WHO HAS COME TO THE CONGRESS YEAR AFTER YEAR IN SUPPORT OF
PROGRAMS TO HELP THESE PEOPLE? WHO HAS PUT ITS MUSCLE BEHIND
THOSE PROGRAMS? THE AMERICAN LABOR MOVEMENT, THAT'S WHO.

THROUGH COMMUNITY SERVICE AND POLITICAL ACTION, AMERICAN
LABOR HAS BROUGHT PROGRESS TO OUR PEOPLE AND HONOR TO OUR LAND.

LAST NOVEMBER YOU IN ORGANIZED LABOR SPENT YOUR TIME,
YOUR ENERGY AND YOUR MONEY TO ELECT A PROGRESSIVE DEMOCRATIC
CONGRESS AND A NEW DEMOCRATIC PRESIDENT. YOUR EFFORTS WERE
DECISIVE IN THE ELECTION OF PRESIDENT CARTER IN THAT CLOSE
AND HARD FOUGHT CAMPAIGN.

THE AMERICAN PEOPLE OWE YOU THEIR GRATITUDE.

THE DEMOCRATIC PARTY OWES YOU ITS THANKS.

THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES OWES YOU HIS
CONTINUED FRIENDSHIP AND SUPPORT.

AND DON'T LET ANY OF US FORGET IT.

TODAY I WANT TO REMIND YOU OF WHAT YOUR VICTORY SHOULD
PRODUCE, WHAT I BELIEVE THE LEGISLATIVE AGENDA OF THIS
ADMINISTRATION AND CONGRESS SHOULD BE.

FIRST, IT SHOULD MEAN A NEW ERA OF COMPETENT AND COMPASSIONATE
GOVERNMENT. THERE CAN AND MUST BE A RESTORATION OF MAJORITY
GOVERNMENT IN THE INTEREST OF THE MAJORITY OF AMERICANS.

IT SHOULD MEAN AN END TO THE DESTRUCTIVE AND SOMETIMES BITTER
DISPUTES BETWEEN THE WHITE HOUSE AND CONGRESS THAT PRODUCED A
TRAGIC STALEMATE IN WASHINGTON FOR MOST OF THE LAST EIGHT YEARS.
CERTAINLY THERE WILL BE DIFFERENCES OF OPINION -- THERE ALREADY HAVE
BEEN -- BUT NOTHING LIKE THE FRUSTRATIONS OF THE LAST EIGHT YEARS.

SECOND, IT SHOULD MEAN MORE JOBS FOR THOSE WHO HAVE
SUFFERED THE TRAGEDY AND INDIGNITY OF UNEMPLOYMENT FOR TOO LONG.

IT SHOULD MEAN RESTORING OUR ECONOMY TO A PATH OF HEALTHY ECONOMIC
GROWTH AND AN END TO THE ECONOMIC ROLLER COASTER THAT WE HAVE
BEEN RIDING FOR SEVERAL YEARS. IT SHOULD MEAN JOBS FOR ALL WHO ARE
ABLE AND WILLING TO WORK. AND IT SHOULD MEAN DECENT WAGES,
INCLUDING A SUBSTANTIAL INCREASE IN THE MINIMUM WAGE.

Today, with nearly seven million Americans "officially"
UNEMPLOYED, AND WITH OVER THREE MILLION YOUNG PEOPLE OUT OF WORK,
A NEW COMMITMENT TO FULL EMPLOYMENT IS URGENTLY NEEDED. WE MUST
ESTABLISH IN LAW THE PRINCIPLE THAT NO AMERICAN WHO IS ABLE, WILLING
AND SEEKING TO WORK SHOULD BE DENIED THAT OPPORTUNITY. AND WE
MUST ESTABLISH THE PROCESS THAT WILL MAKE THAT PRINCIPLE A REALITY
FOR OUR PEOPLE.

THE HUMPHREY-HAWKINS FULL EMPLOYMENT BILL WILL FULFILL

THIS FUNDAMENTAL RIGHT OF ALL AMERICANS. AND WE CAN ACCOMPLISH
THIS IF WE WORK AT IT TOGETHER.

AMERICA CANNOT SURVIVE AS WE KNOW IT IF WE FAIL TO MEET THIS
BASIC NEED, THIS FUNDAMENTAL RIGHT OF OUR PEOPLE.

3 (THIRD) OUR VICTORY LAST NOVEMBER SHOULD MEAN A NEW COMMITMENT
TO REVITALIZE OUR DEPRESSED URBAN AREAS AND TO MAKE OUR NEIGHBOR-
HOODS BETTER PLACES IN WHICH TO LIVE AND RAISE OUR FAMILIES --
CLEAN AND SAFE WITH DECENT HOUSING FOR ALL OUR FAMILIES. Housing

AT THE END OF WORLD WAR II THE VERY SURVIVAL OF WESTERN
DEMOCRACY WAS SERIOUSLY THREATENED ALL OVER EUROPE. UNDER THE
WISE AND DETERMINED LEADERSHIP OF PRESIDENT TRUMAN THE MARSHALL
PLAN WAS LAUNCHED.

IT RESTORED THE WAR-RAVAGED CITIES OF EUROPE AND LAID THE BASIS FOR THEIR ECONOMIC RECOVERY AND SURVIVAL AS DEMOCRATIC SOCIETIES.

TODAY, AMERICA'S CITIES REQUIRE THE SAME KIND OF BOLD AND IMAGINATIVE COMMITMENT OF WILL AND RESOURCES IF THEY ARE TO BE RESTORED.

✓ WE MUST MOUNT A MARSHALL PLAN TO RESTORE AMERICA'S CITIES.

✓ WE MUST PROVIDE THE FINANCIAL RESOURCES TO REBUILD OUR CITIES,
IMPROVE PUBLIC SERVICES AND ENCOURAGE PRIVATE INVESTMENT IN THEM.

AT THE SAME TIME, WE MUST REDUCE THE STAGGERING BURDEN OF SOCIAL WELFARE CARRIED ON THE SHOULDERS OF OUR HARD PRESSED CITIES.

✓ NO ONE IS NAIVE ENOUGH TO BELIEVE THAT THIS JOB WILL BE EASILY DONE. ✓ BUT NO THINKING AMERICAN CAN DENY THAT THE MAGNITUDE AND IMPORTANCE OF THE PROBLEM DEMANDS THAT IT BE DONE.

Energy -11-

FOURTH, OUR VICTORY SHOULD MEAN A TOUGH, BUT FAIR,
COMPREHENSIVE NATIONAL ENERGY POLICY. CERTAINLY, THERE IS NO
EASY SOLUTION TO THIS PROBLEM. IF THERE WERE ONE, THE PROBLEM
WOULD HAVE BEEN RESOLVED BY NOW.

FOR YEARS WE LIVED UNDER THE ILLUSION OF LIMITLESS SUPPLIES
OF CHEAP GAS AND OIL. THE LINES AT THE GAS PUMPS IN 1973 AND
THE FACTORY CLOSINGS AND COLD HOMES OF THIS PAST WINTER ARE
STARK REMINDERS THAT WE WERE WRONG.

DESPITE THE FACT THAT PRESIDENT CARTER'S ENERGY PROPOSALS
WILL NOT BE POPULAR IN EVERY DETAIL TO EVERY AMERICAN, HE HAS
RECOGNIZED THE NEED TO ACT AND HE HAS DONE SO. HIS LEADERSHIP
WILL BE REWARDED BY AN OUTPOURING OF PUBLIC SUPPORT, AS LONG AS
ALL AMERICANS ARE ASSURED THAT THE SACRIFICES CALLED FOR WILL
BE SHARED BY CONSUMERS AND BUSINESS, RICH AND POOR ALIKE.

FIFTH, OUR VICTORY SHOULD MEAN THE RESTORATION OF AMERICAN
MORAL LEADERSHIP AROUND THE WORLD. ONLY A NATION WITH A STRONG
MORAL COMMITMENT TO ITS OWN CITIZENS CAN PROVIDE A MORAL TONE
TO THE CONDUCT OF INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS.

ALL OF AMERICA'S GREAT LEADERS UNDERSTOOD THAT OUR NATION'S
SECURITY LIES IN THE STRENGTH OF OUR PEOPLE -- OUR PEOPLE AT WORK,
OUR PEOPLE IN PROSPEROUS COMMUNITIES, OUR PEOPLE IN GOOD HOMES
IN DECENT NEIGHBORHOODS, OUR PEOPLE IN SOUND MENTAL AND PHYSICAL
HEALTH. THIS IS WHERE OUR VITAL NATIONAL SECURITY LIES. THIS
IS THE SOURCE OF OUR STRENGTH -- MORAL, POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC.

FINALLY, OUR ELECTION VICTORY SHOULD MEAN A NEW SPIRIT FOR
AMERICA -- A NEW SPIRIT EMBUED WITH FAITH AND HOPE IN A BRIGHTER
FUTURE FOR ALL OUR PEOPLE.

IT SHOULD MEAN A RENEWAL OF THE SPIRIT OF GREATNESS THAT
GUIDED OUR FOREFATHERS IN THEIR VISION OF THE GREATEST DEMOCRACY
IN HISTORY. IT SHOULD MEAN A GOVERNMENT THAT IS TRULY,
"OF, BY AND FOR THE PEOPLE," DEDICATED TO "LIFE, LIBERTY AND
THE PURSUIT OF HAPPINESS."

THESE SHOULD BE THE FRUITS OF OUR GREAT VICTORY. THESE CAN
BE THE ABUNDANT HARVEST PRODUCED BY YOUR HARD WORK. BUT IT WILL
ONLY COME TO BE IF YOU CONTINUE TO WORK FOR IT. AND, IF WE DO,
I ASSURE YOU THAT AMERICA'S BEST DAYS, ITS GREATEST DAYS, HAVE
ONLY JUST BEGUN.

#



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