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Remarks by Senator Edmund S. Muskie at Serb Hall Rally

Edmund S. Muskie

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REMARKS BY SENATOR EDMUND S. MUSKIE

SERB HALL RALLY -- SOUTH MILWAUKEE, WISCONSIN

7:30 P.M., SEPTEMBER 27, 1971

I AM PLEASED TO BE BACK IN SERB HALL, WHICH HAS ECHOED FOR SO MANY YEARS WITH RINGING PROOF OF WHAT IS GOOD AND GREAT ABOUT THE DEMOCRATIC PARTY.

AS I LOOK AROUND TONIGHT, I THINK OF THE ORIGINS OF DEMOCRACY IN THIS STATE AND COUNTRY. I THINK OF HOW MY FATHER, AND MANY OF YOURS, LEFT POLAND AND THE OPPRESSION OF EASTERN EUROPE, AND FOUND SANCTUARY HERE -- SANCTUARY FROM INJUSTICE AND FEAR -- IN THE CITIES AND TOWNS AND NEIGHBORHOODS OF AMERICA.

AND AS MUCH AS SERB HALL STANDS FOR THE HERITAGE OF THE PAST, IT HOUSES AS WELL A VISION OF THE FUTURE, A VISION NURTURED BY MEN LIKE GAYLORD NELSON AND BILL PROXMIRE, PAT LUCEY AND HENRY MEIER. . . LEADERS WHO WILL HELP THIS STATE PUT A DEMOCRAT BACK IN THE WHITE HOUSE IN 1972.

A DECADE AGO, JOHN KENNEDY TOLD US THAT WE COULD BE BETTER THAN WE THOUGHT WE WERE. . . THAT A NEW GENERATION OF AMERICANS COULD BUILD A COUNTRY WORTHY OF ALL THAT HAD GONE BEFORE. . . THAT WE COULD MAKE PEACE IN THE WORLD AND BUILD PROSPERITY IN OUR OWN LAND.

WITH THAT EXPRESSION OF FAITH, PRESIDENT KENNEDY INAUGURATED NOT ONLY A NEW ADMINISTRATION, BUT A NEW TIME. . . A TIME OF HOPE AND TRUST AND CONFIDENCE IN OUR COUNTRY AND OURSELVES.

BUT AMERICANS HAVE CHANGED SINCE 1961. BIT BY BIT HOPE DIED. . .
NEAR AN UNDERPASS IN DALLAS AND ON A KITCHEN FLOOR IN LOS ANGELES. . .
IN A WAR HALF A WORLD AWAY AND OUTSIDE A CLOSED FACTORY JUST DOWN
THE STREET.

AND SO TODAY AMERICANS ARE LIVING WITH DOUBT. . . DOUBT ABOUT OUR
POLITICAL LEADERS. . . DOUBT ABOUT OUR PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS. . . DOUBT ABOUT
EACH OTHER. AND WE DOUBT INCREASINGLY THAT THESE DOUBTS CAN EVER BE RESOLVED.

THAT IS THE MOOD OF THIS NATION IN 1971.

YOU CAN SEE IT IN THE SHRUG OF AN UNEMPLOYED MACHINIST, WHOSE
CHILDREN ASK WHY HE STAYS AT HOME.

YOU CAN HEAR IT IN THE DISCOURAGED VOICE OF A FARMER WHO SPENDS
HALF HIS TIME PLOWING ANOTHER MAN'S FIELDS.

YOU CAN FEEL IT IN THE FRUSTRATION OF A HOUSEWIFE WHOSE REFRIGERATOR
BREAKS DOWN WHEN THERE IS NO MONEY FOR REPAIRS.

AND YOU CAN SENSE IT IN THE QUESTIONS WE ALL ASK ABOUT THE FUTURE
AND THE FATE OF AMERICA.

MOST OF ALL, WE WANT TO KNOW THE TRUTH. . . FROM OUR GOVERNMENT
AND FROM EACH OTHER. . . ABOUT OUR COLLECTIVE WISDOM AND OUR COLLECTIVE
SHORTCOMINGS. . . ABOUT THE STRENGTHS WE STILL HAVE AND THE TASKS WE MUST
ALL FACE. WE WANT A POLITICS OF TRUTH TO GUIDE OUR DESTINY IN THE YEARS
THAT LIE AHEAD. THAT IS THE ONLY WAY TO KEEP THIS COUNTRY -- TO KEEP IT
FREE -- TO MAKE IT AS GOOD AND AS GREAT AS IT CAN BE.

ONE PLACE TO START LOOKING FOR THE TRUTH IS IN THE STATE OF THE ECONOMY. IN 1968 I WARNED THAT RICHARD NIXON REPRESENTED POLICIES THAT COULD LEAD US INTO RECESSION AND ECONOMIC DECLINE. I REMEMBER HIS RESPONSE. . . HE SAID THE ONLY UNEMPLOYMENT THAT WOULD FOLLOW WHEN HE TOOK OFFICE WAS THE UNEMPLOYMENT OF PRESIDENT JOHNSON'S COUNCIL OF ECONOMIC ADVISORS. AND WHAT WAS THE TRUTH THERE? UNEMPLOYMENT IN THIS COUNTRY HAS CLIMBED FROM 3½% TO MORE THAN 6% SINCE 1969. THE RATE IN MILWAUKEE IS 5.2% -- AND IN GREEN BAY IT IS MORE THAN A FULL POINT HIGHER. AND IN 1971, THE PURCHASING POWER OF YOUR DOLLARS HAS DECLINED AGAIN AND AGAIN.

AND WHAT WAS THE PRESIDENT'S RESPONSE TO THE TRUTH? HE TOLD US THAT HE WAS INSTITUTING THE BIGGEST ECONOMIC PROGRAM SINCE THE NINETEEN-THIRTIES. AND NO WONDER. THAT'S WHAT IT WILL TAKE TO PULL US OUT OF THE BIGGEST ECONOMIC MESS SINCE THE GREAT DEPRESSION.

WE CAN DO BETTER THAN THIS. . . THAN AN ADMINISTRATION WHICH PLEDGED PROSPERITY, PRODUCED RECESSION, AND NOW PROMISES THE ECONOMIC MIRACLE OF GETTING US BACK WHERE WE WERE WHEN THEY STARTED.

HOW HAVE WE ENDED UP WITH THAT AS OUR BEST HOPE? BECAUSE THIS ADMINISTRATION JUST DOESN'T BELIEVE IN THE CAPACITY OF THE AMERICAN PEOPLE TO HEAR AND FACE THE TRUTH.

WE HAVE HAD, NOW, FOUR DIFFERENT ECONOMIC POLICIES SINCE 1969. AND AFTER EACH ONE, THE PRESS HAS SAID TO ME: "WELL, SENATOR, NOW THAT PRESIDENT NIXON HAS SOLVED THE ECONOMIC PROBLEM, WHAT ISSUE ARE YOU GOING TO HAVE IN 1972?" AND I SAY TO YOU HERE TONIGHT THAT THE ISSUE WILL BE THE SAME AS IT WAS AFTER THE LAST THREE ECONOMIC POLICIES FAILED. . . FOR THE HARD TRUTH IS THAT THE ADMINISTRATION WHICH WAS DOING NOTHING HAS JUST DONE THE WRONG THING.

THE PRESIDENT HAS PROPOSED THE LARGEST SINGLE CORPORATE TAX CUT IN ANY YEAR IN THE HISTORY OF THIS COUNTRY. AT THE SAME TIME, SOCIAL SECURITY TAX INCREASES MAY WIPE OUT EVEN THE VERY MODEST GAINS HE PROMISES FOR MIDDLE INCOME FAMILIES. I DID NOT SUPPORT -- AND I WILL NEVER SUPPORT -- A PROGRAM LIKE THIS. . . WITH APPROXIMATELY \$14 BILLION IN BENEFITS FOR BIG BUSINESS AND ONLY \$5 BILLION FOR AMERICAN WORKERS AND CONSUMERS.
BY THE END OF 1972.

THAT IS NOT RIGHT. IT IS NOT GOOD ECONOMICS. IT IS NOT GOOD SOCIAL POLICY. AND IT IS NOT FAIR.

PRESIDENT NIXON WANTS TO ENCOURAGE THE PRODUCTION AND INSTALLATION OF NEW PLANT MACHINERY THROUGH FEDERALLY SUBSIDIZED INVESTMENT. BUT BUSINESS NEEDS MARKETS, NOT SPECIAL PRIVILEGES -- BUYERS, NOT A TAX BREAK -- SALES, NOT AN \$8 BILLION INVESTMENT TAX CREDIT.

THAT IS WHY I PROPOSED A CONSUMER TAX CREDIT TO RETURN \$7 BILLION TO THE AMERICAN PEOPLE. . . INSTEAD OF PUMPING MORE AND MORE MONEY INTO CORPORATIONS IN THE HOPE THAT SOME OF IT WILL EVENTUALLY TRICKLE DOWN. THE REPUBLICANS GAVE THE COUNTRY A BIG DOSE OF "TRICKLE-DOWN" MEDICINE IN THE 1920's. THE RESULT WAS AN ECONOMIC DISASTER CALLED THE GREAT DEPRESSION.

WHAT IS THE TRUTH ABOUT AN INVESTMENT CREDIT? THE PRESIDENT HAS NOT TOLD US. HIS PLAN WOULD HAVE HELPED INTERNATIONAL HARVESTER BUILD MORE TRACTORS, BUT THEY WOULD HAVE RUSTED IN THE WAREHOUSES BECAUSE FARMERS AREN'T BUYING. AND FRAMERS AREN'T BUYING BECAUSE PEOPLE AREN'T BUYING.

THE PRESIDENT'S PLAN WOULD HAVE HELPED KERRING BUILD MORE MACHINE TOOLS. BUT MACHINE TOOL INDUSTRIES AREN'T BUYING. . . BECAUSE PEOPLE AREN'T BUYING THEIR PRODUCTS.

WHAT IS MISSING FROM THE NIXON PLAN IS CONFIDENCE -- CONSUMER CONFIDENCE -- THE CONFIDENCE OF RANK AND FILE AMERICANS IN THEIR GOVERNMENT, THE DIRECTION IN WHICH IT IS HEADED, AND THE PROGRAMS IT PROPOSES.

THE CONSUMER CREDIT BUILDS CONFIDENCE AND PURCHASING POWER, AND CONSUMER SPENDING BUILDS THE MARKETS FOR INTERNATIONAL HARVESTER AND KERRING AND BUSINESSES ALL OVER THE COUNTRY. AND MARKETS BUILD JOBS -- JOBS FOR MACHINISTS AND ELECTRICIANS -- JOBS FOR FACTORY WORKERS AND REPAIRMEN -- JOBS FOR SALESMEN AND CARPENTERS.

THAT IS THE FAIREST WAY TO CREATE JOBS -- THE WAY THE DEMOCRATIC PARTY HAS ALWAYS TRIED TO BUILD PROSPERITY -- BY PUTTING MONEY IN THE WALLETS AND POCKETBOOKS OF FAMILIES -- NOT JUST IN THE COFFERS OF CORPORATE TREASURIES.

IT IS NOT FAIR TO LET JUST A HANDFUL OF AMERICANS FIND OUT WHAT THEIR COUNTRY CAN DO FOR THEM. WE MUST TURN AWAY FROM A POLICY WHICH AIDS THE WEALTHY FEW -- TOWARD A POLICY TO SERVE ALL OUR PEOPLE.

AND WHAT HAS THE PRESIDENT DONE TO STOP A CRIPPLING INFLATION?

FOR THREE YEARS, HE TOLD US THAT THINGS WOULD GET BETTER IF WE LEFT THEM ALONE. YOU REMEMBER IN JUNE OF THIS YEAR, AFTER A WELL PUBLICIZED REVIEW OF ECONOMIC POLICY BY THE PRESIDENT, BY SECRETARY CONNALLY, BY THE CABINET, BY ALL THE ECONOMIC ADVISORS. . . A REVIEW DESIGNED TO SET US ON THE RIGHT COURSE, SECRETARY CONNALLY ANNOUNCED THAT THE PRESIDENT WAS SATISFIED WITH HIS PRESENT ECONOMIC POLICIES.

SO WHAT HAPPENED BETWEEN JULY 1 AND AUGUST 14 TO CHANGE THAT? WHAT HAPPENED TO MAKE SO WRONG IN AUGUST WHAT THEY SAID WAS SO RIGHT IN JUNE? THERE IS ONLY ONE CONCLUSION TO DRAW. . . THE ADMINISTRATION DIDN'T KNOW WHERE IT WAS GOING IN JUNE. . . AND THE PROBABILITY IS THAT IT DIDN'T KNOW WHAT IT WAS DOING IN AUGUST EITHER. THE GREAT ECONOMIC BLOCKBUSTER WAS SO UNPLANNED THAT THE GOVERNMENT ISSUED FOUR DIFFERENT AND CONFLICTING RULINGS ON TEACHER SALARIES WITHIN THE FIRST WEEK.

AND YOU REMEMBER THE SECOND AMERICAN REVOLUTION, WHICH THE PRESIDENT ANNOUNCED IN HIS STATE OF THE UNION MESSAGE LAST JANUARY. YOU REMEMBER IT. . . WELFARE REFORM AND REVENUE SHARING. THAT REVOLUTION ENDED ON AUGUST 14TH. IF THE FIRST ONE HAD ENDED THAT SOON, WE'D ALL BE BRITISH SUBJECTS IN 1971.

NOBODY NEEDS TO TELL MILWAUKEE THE TRUTH ABOUT REVENUE SHARING.

YOU KNOW THE TAXES YOU PAY. ANYONE WHO OWNS A \$20,000 HOME IN MILWAUKEE PAYS \$966 A YEAR IN PROPERTY TAXES. OF COURSE, WE CAN VOTE A NEW LIMIT ON PROPERTY TAX RATES -- BUT HOW LONG WILL IT BE BEFORE WE SURPASS THAT AND THE NEXT ONE. AND THE NEXT?

AND WITHOUT REVENUE SHARING, WHO WILL FINANCE THE SERVICES SO VITAL TO YOUR HEALTH AND SAFETY. . . STREETS THAT ARE BRIGHT AND SAFE. . . NEW HOSPITALS THAT ARE WELL-STAFFED. . . BETTER SCHOOLS FOR YOUR CHILDREN?

HAS THE PRESIDENT ACKNOWLEDGED THE TRUTH ABOUT SCHOOLS IN WISCONSIN? THE KELLETT COMMISSION ISSUED A FRIGHTENING REPORT IN MENASHA JUST A FEW MONTHS AGO. IT SAID THAT EVERY THIRD GRADE CLASS IN THIS STATE CONTAINS PUPILS WHO ARE ILLITERATE. IT SAID THAT 5% OF WISCONSIN'S KINDERGARTEN CHILDREN HAVE SERIOUS UNTREATED LEARNING DISABILITIES. THE TRUTH ABOUT THE PRESIDENT'S DECISION IS THAT IT WILL HURT THE CHILDREN OF WISCONSIN. AND THE STATE CANNOT HELP MUCH. FORTY-FIVE PERCENT OF EVERY TAX DOLLAR ALREADY GOES TO EDUCATION. I THINK OUR CHILDREN ARE WORTH MORE THAN A \$14 BILLION BONUS TO BIG BUSINESS -- AND THAT IS WHAT WE HAVE TO TELL MR. NIXON IN NOVEMBER OF 1972.

THERE IS MUCH WRONG IN THE PRESIDENT'S RESPONSE TO ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL NEED. AND WISCONSIN KNOWS THAT THERE IS MUCH MISSING AS WELL.

WHAT HAS THE PRESIDENT DONE TO ASSIST ECONOMIC CONVERSION -- TO PROTECT THE NEXT DELCO ELECTRONICS FROM ECONOMIC COLLAPSE, AND TO FIND NEW JOBS FOR ITS WORKERS? NOTHING.

WHAT HAS THE PRESIDENT DONE TO NARROW THE \$3000 GAP BETWEEN FARM AND NON-FARM INCOMES? TO HALT THE DISAPPEARANCE OF FAMILY FARMS FROM WISCONSIN FIELDS? TO KEEP WISCONSIN FARMERS WORKING ON THEIR OWN LAND? NOTHING.

WHAT IT ADDS UP TO IS A RECORD OF NEGLECT. . . NEGLECTED FARMERS,
NEGLECTED WORKERS. . . AND NEGLECTED CONSUMERS.

TELLING THE TRUTH HAS ALWAYS BEEN A FUNDAMENTAL PRECEPT OF THE
AMERICAN HERITAGE. THE ARCHITECTS OF OUR COUNTRY PAINFULLY STRUCTURED
A SOCIETY IN WHICH TRUTH COULD BE PURSUED WITHOUT SUPPRESSION AND
HONESTY WOULD BE RESPECTED AND ADMIRERD.

THE PEOPLE OF THIS NATION WANT LEADERS WHO CAN RECAPTURE THAT
HERITAGE -- LEADERS WHO BELIEVE IN THE PEOPLE, IN THEIR CAPACITY TO HEAR
THE GOOD AND THE BAD, IN THEIR WISDOM AND THEIR STRENGTH -- LEADERS WHO
KNOW THAT CHALLENGES ARE NOT OVERCOME BY WISHING THEM AWAY.

AND WHEN PEOPLE AND THEIR GOVERNMENT WORK TOGETHER -- FACING PROBLEMS
OPENLY -- SHARING VISIONS OF A BETTER TIME -- WE CAN BEGIN TO MOVE OUR
COUNTRY FORWARD ONCE AGAIN.

ANY PRESIDENT WHO FAILS TO LEARN THAT LESSON DESERVES TO BE CALLED
A "ONE-TERM PRESIDENT."

WE CAN GIVE HIM THAT TITLE -- TOGETHER -- IN 1972.

TOGETHER, LET US DO THAT MUCH -- AND THEN WE CAN DO SO MUCH MORE.

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