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Remarks by Senator Edmund S. Muskie at the Providence City Committee Dinner

Edmund S. Muskie

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REMARKS BY SENATOR EDMUND S. MUSKIE

PROVIDENCE CITY COMMITTEE DINNER

7:30 P.M., FRIDAY, OCTOBER 8, 1971

I AM PLEASED TO BE HERE TONIGHT. RHODE ISLAND IS OUR SMALLEST STATE, BUT PACKED BETWEEN YOUR BORDERS IS THE STRONGEST AND GREATEST DEMOCRATIC PARTY ORGANIZATION IN THE ENTIRE COUNTRY.

YOU GAVE JOHN KENNEDY HIS HIGHEST VOTE IN ANY STATE AGAINST RICHARD NIXON IN 1960.

YOU GAVE HUBERT HUMPHREY HIS HIGHEST VOTE IN ANY STATE AGAINST RICHARD NIXON IN 1968.

I CAN'T WAIT FOR 1972.

~~AND WE MAY NOT HAVE TO WAIT THAT LONG TO SEE A NEW ENGLANDER ON THE SUPREME COURT. THE PRESIDENT, I AM TOLD, IS LOOKING AROUND UP HERE FOR A LAWYER HE CAN APPOINT TO THE COURT. HE WANTS A MAN OR WOMAN WITH EXACTLY THE SAME QUALIFICATIONS AS HAROLD CARSWELL. I THINK NEW ENGLAND CAN BE PROUD OF THE FACT THAT HE HASN'T FOUND ONE YET.~~

AND I THINK YOU CAN BE PROUD OF THE POLITICAL LEADERSHIP
IN THIS CITY AND STATE.

I HAVE HAD THE PRIVILEGE OF WORKING IN WASHINGTON WITH
JOHN PASTORE AND CLAIBORNE PELL. . . WITH FRED ST. GERMAIN AND
BOB TIERNAN. I KNOW AS WELL AS YOU HOW EFFECTIVE THEIR VOICES
ARE IN THE SENATE AND THE HOUSE.

AND HERE AT HOME YOU HAVE SEEN THE SAME HIGH STANDARD
OF PUBLIC SERVICE.

FRANK LICHT IS YOUR GOVERNOR AND MY FRIEND. I KNOW HOW
TOUGH HIS JOB IS. . . I WAS A GOVERNOR ONCE MYSELF.

IN A TIME OF ECONOMIC DECLINE, IT WOULD BE EASY FOR FRANK
TO DECIDE THAT RHODE ISLAND CAN'T HELP ITS CITIES ANYMORE. . .
AND HE COULD PROBABLY GET AWAY WITH IT. BUT YOUR GOVERNOR HAS
REFUSED TO GIVE UP ON THE FUTURE OF YOUR STATE. AS A RESULT
OF HIS COURAGE AND HIS COMMITMENT, RHODE ISLAND WILL BE A BETTER
PLACE FOR YOU AND YOUR FAMILIES.

I ALSO KNOW YOUR MAYOR WELL -- AND I KNOW HOW MUCH JOE
DOORLEY HAS DONE FOR THIS CITY. EVERYTIME I COME TO PROVIDENCE,
I SEE THE VISIBLE PROGRESS HE IS MAKING IN HIS PROGRAM TO
REBUILD YOUR DOWNTOWN. JOE HAS FOUGHT FOR URBAN REDEVELOPMENT.
TO KEEP PROVIDENCE A VIBRANT, GROWING, DECENT PLACE TO LIVE AND
WORK. AND HE HAS FOUGHT THE HARD FIGHT TO KEEP PROPERTY TAXES
AT A REASONABLE LEVEL. . . SO YOUR FAMILIES CAN BUILD A
REASONABLE STANDARD OF LIFE.

LARRY MCGARRY

I HAVE BEEN MOVING AROUND THE COUNTRY A LOT IN THE LAST
FEW MONTHS. BUT COMING BACK TO RHODE ISLAND IS LIKE COMING
HOME AGAIN. A VISIT WITH SUPPORTERS LIKE FRANK LICHT AND JOE
DOORLEY MAKES ALL THE CAMPAIGNING AND ALL THE TIME SEEM VERY
WORTHWHILE.

TONIGHT I WANT TO TALK WITH YOU ABOUT WHY I AM MAKING
THAT EFFORT. I WANT TO TALK WITH YOU ABOUT THE REPUBLICAN
ADMINISTRATION IN WASHINGTON. I'VE CHOSEN TO SPEAK ON THE NIXON
YEARS REMEMBERING THE WORDS OF MY UNCLE NORTON: "WHEN YOU DON'T
HAVE ANYTHING GOOD TO SAY ABOUT SOMEONE. . . LET'S HEAR IT."

IN THAT CASE, I'M GOING TO HAVE A LOT TO SAY. . .
BECAUSE THERE'S A LOT THAT IS WRONG WITH THIS ADMINISTRATION.

MUCH OF WHAT IS WRONG CAN BE MEASURED IN STATISTICS
WHICH CHRONICLE THE RISING LEVEL OF UNEMPLOYMENT, THE FALLING
VALUE OF OUR DOLLARS, THE RATE OF CRIME, AND THE TONNAGE OF
AIR AND WATER POLLUTION. BUT I BELIEVE THERE IS A MORE
FUNDAMENTAL PROBLEM IN OUR SOCIETY.

I HAVE HAD THE OPPORTUNITY IN MY TRAVELS TO PROBE THE
MOOD OF AMERICA. . . TO LEARN SOMETHING ABOUT ITS CONTENT AND
ITS MEANING.

AND WHEREVER I GO IN 1971, AMERICANS ARE LIVING WITH
FRUSTRATIONS WHICH SET THEM APART FROM EACH OTHER --- GRIEVANCES
WHICH MAKE THEM SUSPICIOUS OF EACH OTHER --- DISAPPOINTMENTS
WHICH MAKE THEM ASK: "WHY DOESN'T ANYTHING WORK ANYMORE?"

WHEREVER I GO, AMERICANS TELL ME ABOUT THEIR DOUBTS. . .
DOUBTS ABOUT OUR POLITICAL LEADERS. . . DOUBTS ABOUT OUR PUBLIC
INSTITUTIONS. . . DOUBTS ABOUT OUR OWN PEOPLE.

AND TODAY WE DOUBT INCREASINGLY THAT THESE DOUBTS CAN EVER BE
RESOLVED.

MOST OF ALL, AMERICANS 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.

WHAT HAVE WE COME TO WHEN THE MAJOR CHALLENGE FACING THE
PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES IS THAT THE PEOPLE WHO ELECTED
HIM NO LONGER BELIEVE THE THINGS HE SAYS?

THREE YEARS AGO, THE PRESIDENT PROMISED US FULL
EMPLOYMENT, BUT FIVE MILLION AMERICANS DID NOT GO TO WORK
TODAY. . . AND THEY WILL NOT GO TO WORK ON MONDAY.

SINCE 1969, OUR NATIONAL UNEMPLOYMENT RATE HAS CLIMBED FROM 3½% to 6% -- AND TO MORE THAN 7% IN RHODE ISLAND.

BUT THESE STATISTICS DO NOT SHOW THE DESPAIR OF A FATHER WHOSE CHILDREN ASK WHY HE STAYS AT HOME.

THEY DO NOT SHOW THE FRUSTRATION OF A HOUSEWIFE WHOSE REFRIGERATOR BREAKS DOWN WHEN THERE IS NO MONEY FOR REPAIRS.

THEY DO NOT SHOW THE INDIGNITY OF SKILLED CRAFTSMEN FORCED TO PLEAD FOR MENIAL LABOR.

BUT THAT IS THE REALITY OF UNEMPLOYMENT IN AMERICA. . .

THE TRUTH THAT PRESIDENT NIXON REFUSED FOR SO LONG TO FACE.

AND WHAT HAS HE FINALLY DONE AFTER THREE LONG YEARS OF NEGLECT?

HE HAS PROPOSED THE LARGEST SINGLE CORPORATE TAX CUT IN THE HISTORY OF THIS COUNTRY. HE OFFERS \$14 BILLION TO BIG BUSINESS, AND ONLY \$5 BILLION TO AMERICA'S WORKERS AND CONSUMERS. THIS IS THE OLD "TRICKLE-DOWN" THEORY OF GROWTH -- THAT IF ENOUGH WEALTHY PEOPLE BUY LIMOUSINES, THERE WILL BE MORE JOBS FOR CHAUFFEURS.

THE REPUBLICANS TRIED THAT IN THE 1920'S. THE RESULT WAS
CALLED THE GREAT DEPRESSION.

THIS COUNTRY CANNOT MOVE FORWARD WITH A PRESIDENT WHO
WOULD RATHER PLAY POLITICS WITH PROSPERITY THAN PLAY FAIR WITH
THE AMERICAN PEOPLE. WHAT WE DO NEED IS THE KIND OF JOB-CREATION
POLICY THE DEMOCRATIC PARTY HAS ALWAYS PROVIDED -- ONE THAT PUTS
DOLLARS IN THE WALLETS AND POCKETBOOKS OF THE PEOPLE, NOT JUST
IN THE COFFERS OF CORPORATE TREASURIES.

AND THAT'S THE KIND OF POLICY WE'RE GOING TO PUT INTO
LAW IN 1973. . . AFTER WE PUT A DEMOCRAT BACK IN THE WHITE
HOUSE IN 1972.

BUT THERE IS MORE TO A NATION'S GREATNESS THAN PROSPERITY
FOR PEOPLE. AND TODAY WE ARE FACED WITH A DANGEROUS DECLINE IN
THE PUBLIC SERVICES WHICH SUSTAIN OUR STANDARD OF LIFE.

OUR PEOPLE WALK NIGHT-TIME STREETS HAND-IN-HAND WITH
A FEAR BORN OF DARKNESS, AND UNLIT NEIGHBORHOODS AND RISING CRIME.

OUR CHILDREN STRUGGLE TO LEARN IN CROWDED CLASSROOMS
FROM OVERWORKED TEACHERS.

AND OUR CITIES SLOWLY DETERIORATE UNDER THE WEIGHT OF
POISONED AIR AND CRUMBLING HOUSES AND AWESOME TAX RATES.

AND HOW HAS THE PRESIDENT REACTED TO THESE TRUTHS?

HE GAVE US HOPE ONCE. HE ANNOUNCED A PLAN FOR REVENUE
SHARING IN HIS STATE OF THE UNION MESSAGE. HE CALLED IT THE
SECOND AMERICAN REVOLUTION. BUT A FUNNY THING HAPPENED TO
REVENUE SHARING ON ITS WAY TO THE UNITED STATES CODE. IT WAS
POSTPONED ON AUGUST 15th. IS THAT ANY WAY TO RUN A REVOLUTION?
WHAT IF GEORGE WASHINGTON HAD ANNOUNCED A "SLIGHT DELAY" TO THE
TROOPS AT YORKTOWN? WE WOULD ALL BE BRITISH SUBJECTS IN 1971.

I THINK THE SAFETY OF OUR STREETS, THE LIVES OF OUR
CHILDREN, AND THE PRESERVATION OF OUR CITIES ARE MORE IMPORTANT
THAN A \$14 BILLION BONUS TO BIG BUSINESS. I THINK THE AMERICAN
PEOPLE SHARE THAT BELIEF. . . . AND I THINK THEY'RE GOING TO TELL
THE PRESIDENT ABOUT THEIR FEELINGS IN NOVEMBER OF 1972.

THERE IS ONLY ONE PROMISE THE PRESIDENT HAS KEPT. HE
 PLEDGED THAT THIS NATION WOULD NOT HAVE TO CHOOSE BETWEEN
 INFLATION AND UNEMPLOYMENT. AND WE DID NOT HAVE TO CHOOSE.
 WE HAVE ENDED UP WITH BOTH.

FOR ALMOST THREE YEARS, WE HAVE BEEN HEARING ABOUT
 THE SUCCESS OF THE NIXON ADMINISTRATION. . . ON TELEVISION, IN
 PRESS RELEASES, AND FROM PUBLIC RELATIONS MEN. I WISH WE COULD
 SEE SOME SUCCESS THAT DID NOT REMIND US OF MARK TWAIN'S STORY
 ABOUT HIS ENCOUNTER WITH THE TOWN BULLY, WHO WAS STRONGER AND
 BIGGER THAN HE WAS. TWAIN WROTE: "THRUSTING MY EAR FIRMLY
 BETWEEN HIS TEETH, I THREW HIM HEAVILY TO THE GROUND ON TOP OF ME."

THAT'S THE KIND OF VICTORY THIS ADMINISTRATION IS
 WINNING -- A VICTORY WON IN WORDS AND PROMISES. . . A VICTORY
 THAT IS A LOSS FOR THE WORKERS AND CONSUMERS AND FAMILIES OF
 AMERICA.

ANY PRESIDENT WHO OFFERS US THAT KIND OF VICTORY
DESERVES TO BE CALLED A "ONE-TERM" PRESIDENT.

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

AND NOW I WOULD LIKE TO CLOSE ON A PERSONAL NOTE. IT'S
VERY CLEAR WHY I'M HERE. IF THERE IS ANY DOUBT IN THE MIND OF
ANYONE IN THIS ROOM, THEN YOU DON'T READ THE NEWSPAPERS. YES,
I'M CONSIDERING THE HIGHEST OFFICE IN THIS LAND. LET ME TELL
YOU WHY.

I JUST DON'T BELIEVE I WAS PLACED ON THIS EARTH
PRIMARILY TO PILE UP MATERIAL GOODS FOR MY CHILDREN. IMPORTANT
AS THAT MAY SOMETIMES SEEM, THERE IS A NEED TO DO SOMETHING
MORE. OF COURSE, I DON'T KNOW WHAT ROLE I MAY ULTIMATELY BE
PERMITTED TO PLAY. I DID NOT PLAN MY TWENTY-FIVE YEARS OF
PUBLIC LIFE. MY REWARDS ARE ALREADY BEYOND ANY EXPECTATIONS
I EVER ENTERTAINED.

BUT I WOULD LIKE TO FIND A WAY TO MOVE AMERICA TOWARD MY VISION OF A GREAT NATION. AND THAT VISION INVOLVES MORE THAN ANYTHING ELSE BUILDING A DECENT LIFE FOR EVERY HUMAN BEING IN OUR LAND. THE FORCE THAT MOVES A NATION FORWARD IS NOT FOUND IN GOVERNMENT TREASURIES OR EXECUTIVE CHAMBERS OR ON THE FLOOR OF THE SENATE. IT IS FOUND IN THE HEARTS AND FEELINGS OF PEOPLE. . . IN THEIR CONFIDENCE IN GOVERNMENT AND THEIR CONFIDENCE IN THEMSELVES. . . IN THE KIND OF COMMUNITY WHICH TRULY CAN BRING US TOGETHER IN AN EFFORT TO PERFECT THE COMMON ENTERPRISE WE CALL AMERICA.

AND THAT IS WHY WE MUST CARE ABOUT HONESTY AND TRUTH IN PUBLIC LIFE. HONESTY MEANS TRUST, AND TRUST BRINGS CLOSENESS AND ALLIANCE. AND ALLIED TOGETHER, THERE IS NOTHING OUR PEOPLE CANNOT ACCOMPLISH.

AND THAT, I THINK, IS WHAT WE ALL CAN LEAVE THIS NATION, ALONG WITH OUR MATERIAL GOODS.

IT IS OUR SIMPLE DUTY AS HUMAN BEINGS TO PROVE THAT THERE
CAN BE AT LEAST ONE PLACE ON THIS PLANET WHERE JUSTICE IS
WITHIN REACH FOR THE LEAST MEMBER OF A SOCIETY.

IF WE CAN PROVE THAT, WE WILL MAKE OUR MARK ON
HISTORY.

WE WILL HAVE MOVED A STEP CLOSER TO A COUNTRY IN
WHICH EVERY MAN IS A BROTHER, EVERY WOMAN A SISTER, AND
EVERY DREAM A PLAN.

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