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Edmund S. Muskie Papers

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Remarks by Senator Edmund S. Muskie to the Democratic National Committee

Edmund S. Muskie

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HERE WE ARE AGAIN DOING WHAT DEMOCRATS ARE FAMOUS FOR. . . FIGHTING WITH EACH OTHER. BUT THAT'S NOT THE ONLY THING WE'RE FAMOUS FOR. AS RICHARD NIXON FOUND OUT FROM JOHN KENNEDY AND PAT BROWN, DEMOCRATS ALSO HAVE A HABIT OF WINNING ELECTIONS. AND I BELIEVE THAT EVERYONE HERE HAS A COMMON COMMITMENT AND A COMMON AIM. . . TO MOVE BEYOND THE CONTROVERSIES OF 1971 TO VICTORY AT THE POLLS IN 1972.

AT THE SAME TIME, I MUST CONFESS THAT THIS LUNCHEON IS A UNIQUE EXPERIENCE FOR ME. I HAVE NEVER BEFORE BEEN THE LEAD-OFF SPEAKER ON A BATTLEFIELD.

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OF COURSE, LARRY O'BRIEN HAS ALREADY SAID A FEW WORDS TO THIS GROUP JUST BEFORE LUNCH, HE ALSO HAD SOME WORDS FOR ME. . . IN FACT, HE'S SAID QUITE A FEW THINGS TO ME IN THE LAST SEVERAL DAYS.

AND I WANT TO SAY THIS TO LARRY FOR ALL OF US: YOU ARE ONE OF THE BEST LEADERS THE DEMOCRATIC PARTY HAS EVER HAD. YOU LED US ALL THE WAY TO THE WHITE HOUSE IN 1960. . . AND WE WANT YOU TO LEAD US BACK IN 1972.

SCOOP JACKSON IS ALSO HERE. AND WE KNOW WHICH SIDE WILL WIN THE CREDENTIALS BATTLE. . . WHICHEVER SIDE SCOOP IS ON. IT WILL HAVE THE BEST AMMUNITION. . THE MOST MISSILES AND THE GREATEST FIREPOWER.

AND I DON'T WANT TO FORGET FRED HARRIS. HE HAS A VERY INTERESTING CAMPAIGN THEME. ACCORDING TO HIS SPEECHES, HE WANTS TO REDISTRIBUTE THE WEALTH. HE HOPES TO START WITH THE PERCENTAGES IN THE GALLUP POLL. . . WHEN SENATOR HARRIS TALKS ABOUT BREAKING UP THE MONOPOLY OF THE BIG THREE, HE DOESN'T REALLY MEAN GENERAL MOTORS, FORD, AND CHRYSLER. HE MEANS MUSKIE, KENNEDY, AND HUMPHREY.

HUBERT, OF COURSE, IS AMONG MY CLOSEST FRIENDS. I RAN WITH HIM AND SUPPORTED HIM IN 1968. AND I THINK ONE GOOD TURN DESERVES ANOTHER.

AND I SHOULD MENTION THAT GEORGE McGOVERN IS HERE TO LET US IN ON A SECRET. . . HIS POSITION ON SUPREME COURT NOMINEES. . . AS OF TODAY. THE QUESTION IS -- IS GEORGE FOR THE BIRDS?

OF COURSE, THE MAN WHO DIDN'T COME TO LUNCH IS OUR NEWEST DEMOCRAT, JOHN LINDSAY. NO WONDER HE SWITCHED PARTIES. LOOK AT WHAT FIVE YEARS OF REPUBLICAN RULE HAS DONE TO NEW YORK CITY.

CLEARLY, WE ARE ON THE VERGE OF AN EXCITING YEAR. . . AND THIS MEETING CAN HELP TO MAKE SURE THAT IT IS A DEMOCRATIC YEAR.

BUT WE MEET THIS AFTERNOON IN A MOMENT OF SORROW AS WELL AS ANTICIPATION. WE ALL REGRET THE TRAGIC ILLNESS IN HIS FAMILY WHICH HAS FORCED BIRCH BAYH TO WITHDRAW FROM THE PRESIDENTIAL CAMPAIGN. WE SHALL MISS HIS ELOQUENCE AND HIS COURAGE. . . EVEN THOSE OF US WHO WORRIED ABOUT THE GROWING STRENGTH OF HIS EFFORT. WE PRAY FOR THE RECOVERY OF MARVELLA, HERSELF A GREAT COMPETITOR AND A GREAT FRIEND.

AND WE LOOK FORWARD TO SENATOR BAYH'S INVALUABLE CONTRIBUTION TO
DEMOCRATIC SUCCESS IN 1972.

BIRCH BAYH HAS ALWAYS KNOWN WHAT NONE OF US CAN AFFORD TO FORGET
DURING THE NEXT FEW DIFFICULT HOURS: DEFEATING RICHARD NIXON IS MORE
IMPORTANT THAN WINNING OR LOSING A CONTEST BETWEEN GOOD DEMOCRATS.

YOU KNOW MY POSITION. SOME OF YOU DISAGREE WITH ME. BUT I HOPE WE
CAN AGREE TO WORK TOGETHER FOR CERTAIN VITAL GOALS.

-- TOGETHER, WE MUST WORK FOR A DEMOCRATIC PARTY WHICH IS TRULY
DEMOCRATIC. . . OPEN TO EVERYONE AND COMMITTED TO REFORM.

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-- WE MUST ALSO WORK FOR A NATIONAL ECONOMIC POLICY WHICH IS TRULY
FAIR. . . DESIGNED TO HELP THE MANY WHO ARE IN NEED INSTEAD OF THE FEW
WHO ARE ALREADY WELL-OFF.

-- AND WE MUST WORK FOR AN ADMINISTRATION WHICH TRUSTS THE PEOPLE
WITH THE TRUTH. . . AND FOLLOWS A FOREIGN POLICY THE PEOPLE CAN TRUST.

-- MOST OF ALL, WE MUST WORK TO PROVE THAT SOMEWHERE ON THIS PLANET
THERE CAN BE JUSTICE FOR EVERY MEMBER OF A SOCIETY.

THOSE ARE THE HISTORIC COMMITMENTS OF THE DEMOCRATIC PARTY. THEY
WILL BE ISSUES IN 1972 JUST AS THEY WERE IN 1932 AND 1948 AND 1960.

WE AGREE ON SO MUCH -- AND SO MUCH IS AT STAKE.

SO LET US STAND FOR WHAT WE BELIEVE WITHIN THIS PARTY. AND THEN
LET US UNITE TO FIGHT FOR OUR COMMON BELIEFS ABOUT THE FUTURE OF THIS
COUNTRY.

IN THAT SPIRIT, I WELCOME YOU TO WASHINGTON. . . AS DEMOCRATS WHO
ARE NOT AFRAID OF A VIGOROUS INTERNAL DEBATE. . . AND AS DEMOCRATS WHO
KNOW HOW TO WIN A TOUGH NATIONAL CAMPAIGN.

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