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TRANSCRIPTION OF REMARKS BY SENATOR EDMUND S. MUSKIE

Governor Docking Dinner

Topeka, Kansas - Sunday, October 16, 1971

Thank you very much, Tom, State Chairman Norbert Dryling, Governor and Mrs. Docking, Congressman and Mrs. Bill Roy, Attorney General Miller, State Democratic officers, my old friend, Mrs. Virginia Docking, and my good friends in Kansas.

I came here primarily to say "Happy Birthday" to Bob Docking. And that's a personal privilege indeed. I suppose that at this point he feels very much like Hayward Brun did once when he was introduced very ? he said he understood what a pancake felt like after the syrup had been poured.

But Bob deserves this tribute which you've paid him annually. It doesn't seem possible to me that it is as long ago as seventeen years ago that I first spoke in behalf of a Docking here in Kansas. (Applause) Joyce Docking lost that election -- I hope I had nothing to do with that -- but then went on to win two elections, then to join us in Washington on the Export-Import Bank. . . and I always counted him as a good personal friend.

I didn't realize young Bob was old enough to be Governor when he was elected, but actually he was elected Governor at the same age I was -- the age of forty. He's now 46, and at 46 I was in the United States Senate. Maybe there are some historic parallels to be drawn here. (Applause)

And when you've taken that step, Bob, as I learned in 1968, there are other steps that lie ahead as well. (Applause)

You know, being a Democrat in a state like Maine, or a state like Kansas, used to remind me of the story of a Maine man who wasn't overly bright -- and they're rare -- and he was found roaming the hills of New England with a lantern. Someone asked him why he was walking around with the lantern, and he said it was to keep the elephants away. And so someone said, "Well, there are no elephants in New England." "Well, " (little bit of laughter) he said, "It sure is working, isn't it." / Well, you can think about that one. My staff told me I ought to try it out.

I'm glad to see you've solved your deficit problem. . . . I'm not sure that's a good thing in a party or in a state. I remember when I first went to the State Legislature -- and that's a long time ago -- we had only 24 in the House out of 151 -- and so responsibility didn't rest very heavily on our shoulders in those days. And so when I was elected Democratic floor leader I thought that we ought to try to show some responsibility even though we had no power or influence in the legislature. So I thought we ought to put together a legislative program of our own. . . a Democratic program. Well, it worked out fine until we came to the question of financing it. And this is almost too much responsibility for Democrats to carry, so I said "We've got to think of ways of paying for this program." So one democratic legislator from one of our big cities

stood up and he said, "Well, Mr. Muskie. .".we were formal in those days. .
"Mr. Muskie,"he said "I understand we have a deficit.

Why don't we spend that?" (Laughter) So if you get rid of your deficit,
what are you going to spend from now on?

Which, I think, takes one rather logically to the Nixon Administra-
tion's policies. You know, when I think of that I think of the shortest
will in the history of Maine probate law. It contains just ten words.
It went like this: "Being of sound mind and body, I spent it all."
(Laughter and Applause)

And then I'm being asked what I think of Phase II of the President's
program. Well, really, all it is at this point is structure, there's no
policy in it, nobody's been told what this new structure is going to tell
us to do about the prices we set or the wages we earn. Really, it reminds
me of a resolution that was adopted in the Maine Town Council recently. The
town needed a new jail, and so the Council adopted a resolution and it went
like this: "Resolved, that the town build a new jail, that the new jail be
built from the materials of the old jail, and that the old jail be used until
the new jail is ready." (Laughter and Applause)

Really, when one thinks of what's happened to the economy under
the Nixon Administration, there's really one other Maine story that really
fits it to a T.

It's the story of an out-of-stater who was walking down a country .

road in Maine after a rainstorm. And he noticed an automobile with its wheels spinning in the mud. So he stopped and asked the driver, "Are you stuck?" The driver, who happened to be a native said, "I would be if I was going anywhere." (Laughter)

Well, it's good to be back in Kansas where such stories are appreciated. (Laughter)

You know, some people tell me that we can't carry Kansas. And I honestly don't know whether I could bring your state back into the national Democratic column, but at least my appearance here tonight seems to have brought your junior Senator back home, at least briefly. (Applause) Somehow I get the feeling that Bob Dole is following me around. . . . and I thought the one place I would be safe would be in Kansas. (Applause)

It's always good to leave the confusion of Washington and come back to the real America. You know, we don't really see reality from Washington as often as we should. For instance, one of the new crises in Washington, and you won't believe it, is this -- Spiro Agnew was telling his friends that he's going to abandon golf and take up the javelin. (Laughter) Well, considering his sense of direction that is in a sense a crisis....

But in the Senate we tend to see our nation on paper alone. And we sometimes forget that behind every volume of analysis and statistics that we read there are human beings facing very tough, human problems. And so

whenever I can these days -- and I've now been in some twenty states since Labor Day -- I try to meet the people who live the lives I see before me on paper every day. Not just the corporate executive from Wall Street -- but the steelworker from Detroit; not just the television producer in Los Angeles -- but the farmer on the plains of Kansas; not just the professor in a graduate school -- but the housewife in Des Moines. Those are the people who truly define the American character. . . the fathers who've talked to the Harris and the Gallup polls. . . the mothers who affect the Neilson T.V. ratings. . . that vast multitude of Americans who build our industries, feed our families, and keep our country strong. They've been given new political labels in every Administration I can remember. Once the "backbone of the nation," they became "the great majority," then the "real majority," then the "silent majority," and tonight here in Kansas the "emerging majority." (Applause) And yet as I meet them across this country in every state, I think a more appropriate name for most Americans in the 1970's is the "forgotten majority." For seldom in the history of our country have the needs of so many been sacrificed to the interests of so few. And the evidence is everywhere. In the direction of government programs. . . in the deeper meaning of Presidential rhetoric. in the gains we have lost and the pains we have endured. As we speak tonight, we know that five million Americans did not go to work yesterday, and they will not go to work on Monday. They are the human casualties in a war against inflation that puts productive workers on the front line. Recessions are made in Washington, but they are seen and felt in the homes and neighborhoods of the real America. And the recession damages not only

the workers it puts out of work but the forgotten majority of our people who worry daily about a threat to their jobs and their security.

And the economic issue is just one of many which undermines the confidence of the American people in our purposes, our national policies, our national direction, our national leadership. And the record of this Administration on this one issue, I think, illustrates well enough why.

This Administration has had four economic policies since January of 1969. And after each one I've been asked, "Well, Senator, now that the President has pre-empted the economic issue, what are you going to use in 1972?" And, of course, the answer was the same each time. He may have pre-empted the issue but he didn't solve the problem.

Let's just record the record briefly, to bring it to mind. In January of 1969, within a week after he took office, the President said on the question of wages and prices. He said to management and to labor -- go ahead, boys. Set your own prices and wages -- I won't interfere.

And for almost two-and-a-half years he maintained that posture, refusing to interfere in wage and price decisions. He adopted a policy of a balanced budget that neglected human needs. And in implementing that policy he vetoed appropriations for health, for education, and for hospitals. And when the Congress offered to give him stand-by authority over wages and prices, he said he didn't need, didn't want it, and

threatened to veto it. But we passed it nevertheless.

And what was the result of that policy? Unemployment climbed from 3½% under the last Democratic Administration upward to 6%. Prices continued to rise out of control. And the balance of payments of this country, the balance of payments deficit which was viewed with alarm when it reached 3½ billion dollars under President Johnson, climbed to 12½ billion dollars under President Nixon, and not a word was raised in alarm.

So that was the result of President Nixon's first economic policy. And the people had a chance to speak on that policy in the election of last year. And you know of the results. . . a defeat, a resounding defeat for the President. And so we had Nixon Economic Policy No. 2.

He reversed his field on budgetary policies. I'll give him credit. . . he found a fancy way to describe deficit spending that had never occurred to us. . . he called it a "full-employment budget", with the result that in the last fiscal year we had a deficit of \$23 billion -- one of the record peace time deficits. And this under a President who a year-and-a-half earlier had promised that balanced budget that is economic policy, a President who now welcomed an unbalanced budget.

After that election of 1970, he reluctantly accepted a renewal of the stand-by wage and price authority that the Congress enacted in March, but said he'd never use it. And in the second quarter of this year, we

had the second, or the first trade deficit in over ten years, and if it ends up this year ^{as a deficit} will be the first trade deficit in 40 years. In other words, in the second quarter of this year we did not earn enough abroad -- this great nation of a trillion dollar economy -- we didn't earn enough to pay the salary of a single Ambassador, or Peace Corps worker, or soldier.

And then we had that celebrated review of the President's economic policies in June of this year. And you remember it. It was well publicized. And at the end of the month of June he announced to Secretary Connolly there would be no change in his economic Game Plan. He was well satisfied with the results and was certain that his policy would have the effect of reducing unemployment and bringing prices under control.

Then six weeks later -- just six weeks later -- he turned completely around again and adopted what he said he would never have adopted. he had threatened to veto the authority which made it possible, later reluctantly accepted that authority but said he wouldn't use it, in June said it wasn't needed. And six weeks later he invoked the harshest, most arbitrary form of wage-price control of August 15 that has ever been imposed by an American President.

Now the action was needed. It could have taken a better form but it was needed. The point I make is that this was the fourth economic policy this President had adopted in two-and-a-half years, shifting all over the lot, turning his back on convictions and positions he had insistently urged upon the country for years, and without planning. A policy that was

right in June, six weeks later was wrong, according to this same President.

And still unemployment is over 6%. Prices are still climbing. We had a second quarter with a trade deficit. We're still not earning enough abroad to pay the salary of a single Ambassador, or soldier, or Peace Corps volunteer.

That's the economic record of this Administration. And now what is his goal? What is the goal of this new prosperity which he has described as his new economic policy?

His goal is not even to take us back where we were when he started. His goal is an unemployment level which will be 40% above what it was when he took office. Now that's his economic record, that's his economic plan, and that's his economic goal...For the people he promised price stability and full employment in the campaign of 1968.

I say to you that we need to support wage-price restraint. And I shall do so. And I ask all sectors of the American economy to do so. We need to deal with this unemployment problem and I think we need better policy than the President proposed. But in any case, both of these objectives -- a healthy economy and stabilized prices must command the support of the American people across the board. But, it is not inappropriate to recall and remember the sorry record of this Administration in the economic field.

(Appendix)

The fact is that this President didn't have a plan when he started, he didn't know where he was going when he got underway, and he changed direction as often as the wind shifted.... the political wind shifted as he went along. (Applause)

I say to you that is leadership that is not good enough for America in 1971.

And as I speak of the forgotten majority, we ought not to overlook the American farmer. And here is a glowing record for the Nixon Administration.

What has it done to narrow the \$3000 gap between farm and non-farm income? To bring parity to incomes and to prices? You know the answer better than I. Nothing.

What has it done to halt the disappearance of family farms from the plains of Kansas and the fields of Maine? To give farmers a voice in the decisions which determine their lives and to keep the men of Kansas working in their own fields? Absolutely nothing.

Richard Nixon is the first President since Herbert Hoover who has not sent a farm message to Congress. He's the first President in history to try to abolish the Department of Agriculture. He's the same President who six months ago celebrated Salute to Agriculture Day by throwing a dinner party at the White House for 100 hundred people which included 16

farmers. (Applause) Maybe that's all he could find who were still in business. He's the same President who refused for over a year to meet with a coalition of farm organizations and to speak with their leaders for a few minutes. He's the same man who promised parity ratio increases in 1968, produced a reduction to 69% this year, and then changed the base period of calculation to cover up his broken promise. He's the kind of a man who thinks a speech is a solution to a problem. (Applause) And if the last speech doesn't solve it then he writes a new one. I just wish I could get his stable of speechwriters.

But these two failures of leadership are symptomatic. Symptomatic of an inability of this administration to rally the American people to the tasks which face us. I've had an unusual opportunity to meet Americans of all descriptions in the last three years. White and Black, young and old, from all areas of the country. And I say to you that notwithstanding the evidence-- and it's very great -- of division, discontent, distrust and the suspicions, fears, and even hatreds that separate Americans, I find to a greater extent than ever before in my lifetime, a strong sense of decency among the American people.

I think Americans are looking for a new age of decency. I talk to Americans about their fears, the possible threat from others, especially those who are different...we're separated from them by distance, those weaknesses and shortcomings and tendency toward violence come to them over the television tube -- and yet as I speak to them about the underlying causes, the grievances and injustices -- I find that Americans want to find a way

to live together.... in a whole, healthy, dynamic, compassionate society.

Americans find it more difficult to talk to each other, they find it more difficult to work with each other, they doubt each other, they doubt their leaders, they doubt their government, they doubt our policies, and increasingly they tend to doubt that the doubts can be resolved.

And yet, and yet, I find this great urge to put America back on the road that all of us believed America was traveling through all of our lifetimes, our fathers' lifetimes, going back 200 years to the day when this all started.

I think Americans still believe the fundamental values upon which this country rests are valid. Americans still respond to the honest symbols of our best. And when we've been at our best we've been the best indeed, among the nations of the earth. Indeed, at our very best we've even approached nobility.

Well, we are not at our very best at the moment, in all frankness. But the capability for being so is still there. I tried to find words to articulate what it is that we're looking for. And I found then one night recently when we had some music before the dinner and "The Battle Hymn of the Republic" was played. And one line stood out in that song that night, which you all remember..."The Truth is marching on." That song with its soaring notes has always stirred us because that is its underlying theme.

That America at her best represents the truth....and the truth is that we are great when we make it possible for our people to be great. That we are great when we are open with each other, reaching out to each other, understanding each other, working with each other. . . and when our governments and our leaders are truly responsive and responsible to all of us.

That's the truth we believed America represents for all of the years that we've known the song, we've sung it, believed it, that the truth is marching on as America goes into the future.

But now there are Americans who believe the march has been interrupted. The young believe that. The disadvantaged believe that. Those who are the victims of this uncertain leadership which we've had for two-and-a-half years believe that. And people around the globe who think now that we're dominated not so much by our ideals as by materialism and absorption with sheer military power believe that the march may have been interrupted.

But I say to you that it isn't. I say to you that we've assembled in this country a greater capacity, a greater strength for improving life in our own country and for influencing the affairs of all mankind in a beneficent and healthy way. We've assembled more resources to do this than any country has ever assembled. And I speak not of economic strength alone or military power. But I speak of the spiritual strength that comes from a deep belief in our fundamental assumption that our country is strong as .

our people are strong.

Our intellectual understanding of what it takes to bring people together and to stimulate them to work together, and our practice of the institutions of freedom which convince us that when we really work at the task and do our best, then we build and build well in this country.

Those are the resources that we have. Did it ever occur to us to wonder why? Why we, of all people ever assembled within the borders of a given society, why have we been so blessed? Did history mark us because in 1971 we achieved a trillion dollar economy? Will we be heralded by generations in the future because we produced 8 to 10 million cars a year all these decades? No. You and I know, in our hearts, and I've seen it in your faces, and heard it in your voices, that the duty of this country is to prove that at least in one place on this planet justice, full justice, can come within the reach of even the least member of a society. I think we understand that, and I think Americans are unhappy about themselves and each other because we do not seem to be marching inspired and effectively towards this truth. And I believe you want to. And I believe all Americans want to, because they understand that as we make progress we will once again be that great, pulsating, vibrant country which for most of its life has been the promise of its own people and the hope of all mankind.

Thank you very much.

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