

11-10-1971

Remarks by Senator Edmund S. Muskie at Oregon Technical Institute

Edmund S. Muskie

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Recommended Citation

Muskie, Edmund S., "Remarks by Senator Edmund S. Muskie at Oregon Technical Institute" (1971).
Speeches. 185.
<https://scarab.bates.edu/msp/185>

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REMARKS BY SENATOR EDMUND S. MUSKIE

OREGON TECHNICAL INSTITUTE

KLAMATH FALLS, OREGON

NOVEMBER 10, 1971

Can like that

Doesn't make

any difference

All your office today

We'll all be gone by then

I DID NOT COME HERE TODAY TO MAKE A LONG SPEECH. IN 1971, POLITICIANS TEND TO MAKE TOO MANY SPEECHES AND TOO LITTLE SENSE. AND THAT'S WHY I OFTEN CHOOSE A QUESTION AND ANSWER FORMAT ON COLLEGE CAMPUSES.

IT GIVES YOU A CHANCE TO SEE ME WITHOUT SEARCHING FOR THE HUMAN BEING BEHIND A PREPARED TEXT.

IF I AM HONEST, YOU WILL KNOW IT -- AND THAT WILL BE GOOD FOR ME.

AND IF I CAN HELP TO PERSUADE YOU TO GET INVOLVED IN THE POLITICS OF 1972 -- ON MY SIDE OR SOMEONE ELSE'S, THAT WILL BE GOOD FOR THE COUNTRY.

BUT THE BRIEFING BOOK I HAVE FOR THIS STOP TELLS ME THAT YOU "ARE NOT KNOWN AS POLITICALLY ACTIVE." THOUGH I'M A LITTLE UNCERTAIN WHAT THAT MEANS, I WANT TO TALK ABOUT IT BEFORE I ANSWER YOUR QUESTIONS.

YOUR EDUCATION AT OREGON TECHNICAL INSTITUTE WILL PREPARE YOU FOR SOME OF AMERICA'S MOST VITAL JOBS. IN AREAS RANGING FROM BUSINESS TO CIVIL ENGINEERING TO RADIOLOGIC TECHNOLOGY, YOU WILL LITERALLY KEEP THIS COUNTRY AND OUR ECONOMY RUNNING. WE COULD NOT SURVIVE WITHOUT YOU. AND WE CANNOT MOVE FORWARD AS WE SHOULD UNTIL WE UNDERSTAND YOUR ROLE FOR WHAT IT TRULY IS.

WE MUST STOP PRODUCING TOO MANY COLLEGE GRADUATES AND TOO FEW TECHNICAL GRAUDATES. RIGHT NOW AND FOR AS FAR AS WE CAN SEE INTO THE FUTURE, WE WILL NEED MILLIONS OF NEW TECHNICIANS AND ENGINEERS AND SCIENTISTS FROM SCHOOLS LIKE O.T.I.

AND WE NEED NOT ONLY THOSE WHO KNOW HOW TO DO SOMETHING. BUT
THOSE WHO WILL PARTICIPATE FULLY IN DECIDING WHAT SHOULD BE DONE.

YOU HAVE NO RIGHT TO USE YOUR SKILLS IN ISOLATION. YOU
HAVE A DUTY TO SEE THE LARGER IMPLICATIONS OF YOUR WORK -- TO LOOK
BEYOND SLIDE RULES TO THE HUMAN IMPACT OF TECHNOLOGICAL CHOICE.

DON'T YOU WISH SOMEONE HAD DONE THAT WHEN THE INTERNAL
COMBUSTION ENGINE WAS INVENTED? AND I HOPE YOU WILL DO IT NOW.

YOUR SKILLS CAN FIND THE WAY TO BOTH A GOOD ENVIRONMENT
AND A STRONG ECONOMY IN PLACES LIKE COOS BAY -- WHERE THE CHOICE
TODAY IS CAST AS AN ALL OR NOTHING DECISION BETWEEN POLLUTION
AND UNEMPLOYMENT. BUT YOU WILL ACCOMPLISH LITTLE -- IN COOS BAY
OR ANYWHERE ELSE -- WITHOUT THE COMMITMENT AND THE RESOURCES OF
GOVERNMENT. AND YOU CAN MAKE THAT HAPPEN ONLY THROUGH THE COMMON
ACTION WE CALL POLITICS.

FOR EXAMPLE, LAST WEEK THE SENATE PASSED THE MOST FAR-
REACHING WATER POLLUTION CONTROL BILL EVER APPROVED BY ANY
LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY ON THIS PLANET. THE BILL ~~WILL~~ ^{CAN} MEAN CLEAN
WATER EVERYWHERE IN THE UNITED STATES WITHIN TEN TO FIFTEEN YEARS.
WE LACK THE TECHNOLOGY TO ACHIEVE THAT NOW. BUT BY SETTING THE
GOAL -- BY PUTTING FEDERAL POWER AND FEDERAL RESOURCES BEHIND IT --
WE CAN INSURE A MAXIMUM EFFORT BY THE PEOPLE OF YOUR PROFESSION.
AND THAT EFFORT CAN SUCCEED -- AS A SIMILAR EFFORT TO DEVELOP THE
TECHNOLOGY TO REACH THE MOON SUCCEEDED IN THE 1960s.

BUT YOU MAY NEVER HAVE A CHANCE TO DO THAT MUCH TO FIGHT
WATER POLLUTION. AS WE MEET HERE, THE ADMINISTRATION IS LOBBYING
IN THE HOUSE AGAINST THE WATER BILL. HIGH OFFICIALS AND SPECIAL
INTERESTS HAVE JOINED TOGETHER TO CIRCULATE BOGUS COST FIGURES
AND UNFOUNDED RUMORS ABOUT THE LEGISLATION'S IMPACT. THE VOTES
WILL FINALLY BE COUNTED IN THE HOUSE. BUT THEY WILL JUST AS SURELY
BE INFLUENCED AND PERHAPS DETERMINED BY HOW PEOPLE REACT HERE AND
ACROSS AMERICA.

ONLY POLITICAL PRESSURE CAN PROTECT THIS YEAR'S WATER POLLUTION
LEGISLATION FROM AN ADMINISTRATION WHICH LACKS ENVIRONMENT BACKBONE.

AND SO IT WILL GO THROUGHOUT YOUR LIVES -- ACROSS A BORAD
RANGE OF AMERICA'S DEEPEST CONCERNS.

YOUR TALENTS CAN BE MISUSED FOR THE FURTHER UNPLANNED
DEVELOPMENT OF OUR COUNTRY -- THE KIND OF DEVELOPMENT ~~THAT~~ WILL
ULTIMATELY LEAD TO FURTHER DECLINE. YOU CAN HELP TO PUT ROADS
WHERE THEY DO NOT BELONG. YOU CAN CONTRIBUTE TO THE INVENTION OF
AN S.S.T. THAT SHOULD NEVER FLY. AND YOU CAN STAND ASIDE AS THE
GOVERNMENT DECIDES THAT WAR ABROAD IS MORE IMPORTANT THAN
PEACEFUL SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH HERE AT HOME.

YOU CAN DO ANY OF THAT AND ALL OF THAT -- OR YOU CAN
BECOME POLITICALLY ACTIVE.

TECHNOLOGY HAS MADE MODERN AMERICA POSSIBLE. WITHOUT
COMPUTER SYSTEMS, FOR INSTANCE, WE COULD NOT RUN THE TELEPHONE
COMPANY WITH LESS THAN 50 MILLION EMPLOYEES. AND OREGON TECHNICAL
INSTITUTE WILL MAKE YOU LEADERS IN A TECHNOLOGICAL SOCIETY.

YOU ARE HERE ONLY TWENTY-FIVE YEARS AFTER O.T.I. WAS
FOUNDED -- ONLY SEVEN YEARS AFTER THE SCHOOL MOVED TO THIS CAMPUS --
AND ONLY FIVE YEARS AFTER IT STARTED TO OFFER A BACHELOR'S DEGREE.

THE RATE OF CHANGE HAS BEEN ALMOST BEYOND COMPREHENSION --
AT OREGON TECHNICAL INSTITUTE AND IN OUR SOCIETY.

WILL YOU HELP US NOW -- NOT ONLY TO FIND OUT HOW TO
CHANGE -- BUT TO DECIDE WHAT CHANGES REALLY WILL SERVE OUR PEOPLE
AND OUR COUNTRY?

WILL YOU BECOME POLITICALLY ACTIVE?

THAT IS MY QUESTION -- AND NOW I WOULD BE PLEASED TO
ANSWER YOURS.

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